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JESUS:

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A

PORTRAIT.

BY

REV. JOSEPH BARKER.

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PREFACE.

THIS Book grew out of an Essay read before the M. E. Preachers' meeting of Philadelphia. The preachers requested that the Essay should be published in the form of a book, and here you have the result. I trust my brethren will find the work as much to their liking in its new shape as they found it in its former one. And I pray that the book may prove of service to many others.

If my readers should find as much pleasure and profit in reading the volume, as I have found in writing it, they will have no little cause for thankfulness. Some of the happiest of all my happy days I passed in "looking at Jesus," with a view to catch the features of His character, and fit myself for portraying them to my readers. Again and again did the view I got of the Saviour melt me to tears, and more than once had I to leave my work, and spend some time in the outside world, to allow the superabundance of my joy to subside.

I have taken no notice of the negative critics, but have gone on the supposition that the Gospel accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus are substantially correct. I see no reason whatever to think them otherwise. I have read the writings of several of the skeptical critics, but instead of destroying my faith in the New Testament history, they have delivered me from the last remains of

my doubts of its genuineness, and have given me an assurance of its truthfulness which I feel myself unable to describe. It is like the assurance which I feel of the truth of my own life's history, or of the existence of the visible objects with which I am surrounded.

I dare not trust myself to say all that I think of the school of self-styled rationalistic critics; but I certainly should not like to have to answer for the use they have made of their time and powers. And perhaps it may be best to pass them by without further notice. My impression is that notwithstanding the horrible viciousness of disposition evinced by some of them, and the pitiable folly exhibited by others, their writings will contribute to the revival of pure Christianity in the Church, and to its spread and triumph in the world. The Jews and the Romans destroyed themselves in their war with Christ and Christianity at the outset; and the learning and philosophy that are warring against the New Testament and the Church at the present day, will have a similar fate. Whatever has set itself against Christianity thus far, has come to nought. And so it will be forever. The past is a prophecy of the future. Men may fret and fume and fight as they may, the Church will fill the earth, and Jesus will be Lord of all. God and the universe are on their side, and neither earth nor hell can stay their onward march.

I wish my work had been more worthy of its subject. When I think of the greatness and glory of Christ, and of the infinite excellency of His Gospel, and then reflect on the infinite imperfection of my poor book, I am sad. And my only reason for publishing it is the thought that, unworthy as it is,

it may be better than nothing at all, and I must do what I can. I may perhaps be able to do something more and better for the cause so dear to me, in days to come. Amen.

Among the subjects on which we should have spoken had space permitted are the following:

1. The prophecies of Jesus and their remarkable fulfilment.

2. Jesus and nature; Jesus and science; Jesus and art.

3. Jesus and politics,—democracy, slavery, and political economy.

4. Jesus and civilization.

5. Jesus and His critics and biographers.

6. Jesus and the great religious and political reformers that figure in the world's history.

7. Jesus and Paul,—their teachings compared.

8. Jesus and the Church and ministry as now existing.

9. Jesus and the future of Humanity.

10. What Jesus did *not* teach; mysteries which He did not explain; questionings which He did not answer; popular doctrines which He never taught; unpopular doctrines which He never condemned.

11. Testimonies of skeptics, rationalists, infidels and great geniuses to the excellency of Christ's character and morality.

12. The misconceptions of the Jewish people, of John the Baptist, and of the disciples of Jesus, with regard to His plans. The root of them.

13. Jesus and His enlightened and able advocates.

14. The views of Jesus with regard to the Old Testament Scriptures.

15. Jesus and the writings of the New Testament.
16. The Gospels,—their origin,—their truthfulness,—their richness.

17. The last conversations of Jesus with His disciples.

18. Jesus and Judas.

19. Jesus and Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Romans.

20. Jesus on the Cross: the two thieves: the Roman centurion.

21. Rich sweet sayings which we owe to Jesus.

22. Jesus and fanaticism.

23. Jesus and apostacy.

24. Jesus and half-heartedness.

25. Jesus, His human infirmities, fears, and agonies.

26. Statements of Jesus with regard to His own person.

27. Further statements of Jesus with regard to His work, and His death. The BLOOD of Christ: its power. Explanations.

28. Looking to Jesus.

29. The FAME of Jesus: how Jesus stands with regard to the moral and religious sentiments of mankind.

30. Jesus and infidelity. Christianity and infidelity as rival claimants for the favor of mankind. Contrasted as guides, comforters and regenerators of mankind.

31. Christian worthies and infidel celebrities contrasted.

32. Jesus and Paul again. Paul's history.

These and some other matters of interest we shall continue to think about, if spared, and when suitable opportunity offers, we may present them to the public in another volume.

INTRODUCTION.

THE CLAIMS OF JESUS ON OUR ATTENTION.

1. WE are exhorted by the Apostle to look to Jesus, and are assured by him that a steady contemplation of His character as a revelation of God, will change our souls into the likeness of God's unbounded love. And thousands have proved it to be even so.

2. Then Jesus is the Author of our Religion, and the Founder of our Church. He is our Great Teacher, and we are His scholars. We are called by His name. It is natural therefore that we should wish to be well acquainted with His history and character, His doctrine and His work.

3. We have been taught from our childhood that we are under the greatest imaginable obligations to Jesus, and if this be the case, we ought to know it, that we may make Him suitable returns.

4. There is evidently something most remarkable about Jesus. No one that ever appeared on earth has been the subject of so much thought and so much talk. And books have been written about Him without end. And men seem to be writing about Him at present more eagerly than ever.

He filled the whole country of His birth with excitement during His life, and since His death He has kept the world at large in a ferment. And His name and religion seem likely to engage the thoughts and employ the tongues and pens of mankind to the end of time. The most magnificent structures have been raised to His honor, and the highest art has done homage to His name. The society which He formed is the wonder of the world. Its peculiar constitution, and its wonderful history; its vast dimensions, and its mighty power; the incalculable service it has rendered to mankind, and the multiplied efforts which it is still making for the regeneration and salvation of the world, fill one's mind with amazement. His friends are numberless, and they are the best and most beneficent men and women upon earth. And they love Him with the most intense devotion. Numberless thousands have died for Him in the ages past, and there are numberless thousands still who would die for Him rather than dishonor His name, or betray His cause. He has at this moment a name above every name. He stands at the head of all the great worthies that have ever adorned or blessed our race. The next in honor on the roll of fame are his faithful followers. And the least among His worthies rank higher than the highest of the world's celebrities. And the esteem and reverence in which He is held, and the fervor of the love with which He is regarded, know no bounds.

The hymns men sing in His praise are the richest and sweetest, the wildest and most ecstatic under heaven; and the peace and joy men experience while trusting in Him, and laboring in His cause, are unspeakable and full of glory.

5. And it is certain that the story of His life as given in the Gospels is the strangest story in the world. There is nothing like it in all the books on earth. And it is as interesting as it is strange. It presents a character of the highest conceivable excellence, of the most entrancing loveliness, and of the most amazing originality. It describes a Teacher that spake as never man before Him spake, and that lived as never man before Him lived, and that loved as never man before Him loved. And it contains accounts of the most astonishing works that were ever wrought. And the *end* of His life was like that of no other life. His death was to the last degree tragical. And never was a death so sorrowfully deplored. Yet never was death succeeded by such joyous and startling events. Before He had been in His grave three days, tidings got around that He had risen. His disciples said they had seen Him alive. So did multitudes of others. And it is certain that from that time His disciples were new men. They gave themselves to His cause without reserve, and through their labors the religion of Jesus has transformed mankind, and changed the face of the earth and the history of the world. Can we give

our attention to a subject of greater interest or importance?

6. And there is not the slightest ground for questioning the truth of Christ's history. There is not a book on earth that bears more striking marks of truthfulness, than the books containing The accounts of his life. You might as well suspect a living, laughing, prattling child to be the production of a sculptor, or of a worker in wax, as to suppose the living, natural story of the Gospels to be the work of a forger, or even of an easy, dreamy, good-intentioned poetic fabulist.

But whether the stories of Christ's life be true or false, the subject has the strongest claims on our attention. If they are true, Jesus is the wonder of the universe, and cannot be too devoutly studied. If the Gospels are false, then they and their mysterious authors are the wonders of the universe. Men that could produce a picture like that of the Gospels without an original, and give that picture power to enchant and change the world, would be greater miracles than Christ himself. It would be no light task for truth and matter of fact to produce such effects as the Gospels have produced. To suppose that a few pages of fiction, by an unknown author, could effect such vast and beneficent revolutions, and keep on working with increasing energy for eighteen centuries, would be madness. But the Gospel story is its own proof. If it had not been true, it never could have been at all.

JESUS:

A PORTRAIT.

WE propose to give a portrait of Jesus, as He is depicted by the Evangelists in their records of His life, in hopes that our readers may see something of the infinite excellency of His character and religion, and be led to cast in their lot with Him, and consecrate their lives, their powers and their resources to the furtherance of His cause. A contemplation of Christ, as presented in the Gospel story, has filled our own heart with love to Him, has convinced us that He is indeed the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world ; and has led us to give ourselves and all we have to His service, and to make the extension of His kingdom in the earth the one great object of our life. And our impression is, that if we can bring others to see the sight that has so affected our heart, they may experience the same happy results, and be led to labor for the same grand object, as the end and business of their lives.

We begin with Jesus as a Preacher. A contemplation of Jesus has left the impression on our

mind that He is as a preacher, a model of the highest excellence. Our endeavor shall be to point out a few of the peculiar traits exhibited by Him, which appear to us to be worthy of our highest admiration, and of our most careful imitation.

CHAPTER I.

JESUS A PRACTICAL PREACHER.

JESUS was a thoroughly practical preacher. His object in coming into the world was to "save men from their sins,"—"to redeem them from all iniquity, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And His preaching was in keeping with this object. He began His ministry by calling on men to change their minds and their ways of life, and He went on in the same spirit to the last. The sermon on the mount is an explanation and an inculcation of duty from beginning to end. And the rest of His discourses, with very few exceptions, are like unto it. Their aim and tendency are to withdraw men from their evil ways, and bring them to a new and holy life.

There were many in those days who thought themselves objects of God's favor, and entitled to a place in His kingdom, in virtue of their descent from Abraham. Nicodemus was of this number.

John addressed this class in the plainest and strongest terms. "Think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham for our Father: for God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid to the root of the tree; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." Jesus spake in the same strain, and assured them that their descent from Abraham would be of no avail whatever, unless they had Abraham's faith and obedience,—that unless a man was born again,—raised to a higher life than that of the flesh, he could not enter the kingdom of God. There were some who trusted in sacrifices and offerings; but Jesus taught them that those things were vain without solid virtue,—justice, mercy and truth. He assures His hearers that even their respect for Himself will be of no avail without obedience to the will of God. His words are very strong. "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man that built his house upon a rock. The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man that built his

house upon the sand. The rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

Many of Christ's discourses are parables, but they are all thoroughly practical. Take for instance the parables of the talents, of the good Samaritan, of the barren fig-tree, of the sower and the seed, of the vine and its branches, of the vineyard and the husbandmen, of the prosperous farmer, of the rich man and Lazarus, of the lost sheep, and of the prodigal son. These are all practical in the highest degree. And so are the rest. There is not a speculative one in the whole record of His ministry.

And the kind of virtue or morality which Christ inculcates is the highest possible. It is not mere innocence, or harmlessness, but positive goodness, charity, beneficence, and that in its highest forms. He teaches the insufficiency of mere negative goodness in almost every sentence that He utters. He sets forth this point in the parables of the prosperous farmer and of the rich man and Lazarus in the most striking manner possible. All that is laid to the charge of the rich husbandman is, that he lived and labored simply for himself,—that he looked on his increasing wealth merely as a means of his own safety and enjoyment,—that he did not employ his surplus means in doing good,—that he laid up treasures for *himself*, and was not rich toward God,—rich in good works.

And so with regard to the other rich man. He is not charged with injustice or violence, with oppression or extortion, with deceit or fraud, with drunkenness or licentiousness. No intimation is given that he got his money dishonestly, or that he employed it for what the world would call disreputable purposes. He seems to have been what people generally would regard as a very respectable man. And he seems to have allowed the crumbs which fell from his table to be given to the poor. It is not at all likely that Lazarus was laid at his gate from day to day in vain. The wealthy man appears to have been charitable, so far as he could be so without expense, or trouble, or self-denial. His only fault was that he lived for himself, instead of living to God, and laboring for the good of others. Yet he goes to hell, and when tormented in its flames, is refused a drop of water to cool his burning tongue. This is an awful parable; yet its spirit and meaning are the spirit and meaning of the whole of Christ's discourses. The parable of the talents teaches, that however harmless a man may be, he will be consigned to perdition, if he does not use his talents in the service of God, and for the good of mankind. And the representation of the day of judgment, which follows that parable, shows that however harmlessly or respectably men may live, if they do not labor to supply the wants, to relieve the distresses, to promote the comfort and welfare

of Christ's brethren, they will be sent away into everlasting punishment. The law of Christ is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And we know how we love ourselves, and how we would have men do unto us, if we were in want, in misery, or in danger. The one great lesson that Jesus seeks to impress on His disciples with regard to matters of duty is, that they must not only not be workers of iniquity,—that they must not only be earnest, sincere and truthful, but that they must give themselves, body, soul and estate to the work of disinterested and universal beneficence. One of His first oracles is, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." He teaches us that we are to be the salt of the earth,—the preservers, the saviours of society,—that we are to be the lights of the world,—the instructors and reformers of our race,—letting our "light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven."

Jesus further insists that our righteousness must be hearty, sincere; that it must be in obedience to the law of *God*, not to the commandments of men; and after giving a number of strict lessons on meekness, purity and peace, He urges us to love *all* mankind, to love even our enemies, and to do good to them that despitefully use us and persecute us, that we may be the children of our

Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. And He concludes this part of His discourse with the words, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect:" or as Luke reports it, "Be ye therefore merciful, (beneficent,) even as your Father which is in heaven is merciful."

Jesus teaches us piety to God, as well as mercy and beneficence to men. He teaches us to fear Him, to love Him, and to put our trust in Him. He exhorts us to pray. He requires us to aim at pleasing Him in all we do. He inculcates humility and gratitude. He forbids all hypocrisy and insincerity. He calls on us to consider God's works, and to learn from them lessons of confidence in His Providence, and universal, unbounded goodness to man.

The doctrine of Christian duty from first to last, as set forth by Jesus, is the highest conceivable. And, in its higher branches, it is all His own. Even a rationalist assures us, that it was Jesus that raised the feeling of humanity, or love to our fellow-men, from a feeble *restraining* power, to an inspiring passion. While earlier moralities had dealt chiefly in prohibitions of wrong, Christianity deals in positive commands of love and beneficence. The form of the old law was, *Thou shalt not do wrong!* The form of the new law is, *Thou shalt do good.* The young man who had kept the whole

law, in its old form of prohibition, is required, if he would be perfect, to keep it in its new form,—to employ his wealth in doing good to the poor. The sinner whom Christ habitually condemns is not the thief, the murderer, or the unclean person, but the man who does nothing for the welfare of his fellow-men. The old Pagan principle was, Do as much good to your own country, and as much evil to foreign countries as you can. The Christian principle is, Do good to all. The spirit, the precepts, the power of Christianity raise us to the highest heaven of love, and make our hearts and lives divine.

CHAPTER II.

JESUS ALWAYS CONSISTENT WITH HIMSELF.

JESUS never weakens the force of His remarks and exhortations, by the introduction of false theological theories, or of vain speculations about the origin of evil, or of antinomian views of His own work. He never, after urging men to duty, tells them that they have not power to do it, or talks in such a way as to leave on their minds the impression that it does not matter whether they do it or not. He never teaches people to throw the blame of their negligence in duty on Adam and Eve, or

on some unavoidable weakness or perversity of their nature caused by the first transgression. He never gives us any ground to suspect that there are any limitations to His love, or any partiality in His purposes, or any want of compass in His plans, or that any one can fail of eternal salvation through any cause but his own inexcusable perversity. Nor does He ever hint, that there is anything in His work, to render inward and outward holiness unnecessary to our acceptance with God or our eternal salvation. Not a word does He utter to lessen our sense of duty and responsibility. On the contrary, all that He says tends to strengthen the feeling, that everything, both with regard to our present and eternal salvation, is made to hang on our faithful improvement of our talents, whether they be many or few, and that there is no unrighteousness with God.

There is not a word attributed to Him that could take off the edge from the reproaches of a guilty conscience, or encourage a man to cast the blame of his impenitence on God, or to put off his return to God to a future time. I have in my lifetime heard from pulpits, and read in religious books and tracts, a thousand things which could not, I should think, come from any other source than the Father of lies, and which could not, without a miracle, have any other tendency than to induce people to trifle with their souls, to disregard the rebukes of conscience, and to reconcile them

quietly to leave themselves in the power of the wicked one, till God should see fit to rescue them by a kind of miracle. You find nothing of this in the discourses of Jesus. It is no custom of His to say one word for God and two for the devil; the first sentence for holiness, and the last for sin; nor does He ever let the wicked one use his breath to render His works and word of no effect.

CHAPTER III.

JESUS A PLAIN PREACHER.

JESUS was remarkably plain. His discourses, as a rule, are the perfection of simplicity. There are only two or three sentences of His in the whole of the first three Gospels, which are not as clear as the light. Great truths and duties are made so plain and palpable in His parables, that they stand before us like living visible forms. How vividly the goodness and mercy of God are presented in the parables of the Prodigal Son, of the Great Creditor, and of the Lost Sheep! What light His allusion to the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field throws on God's care of His people! What an illustration of the law of love, of the duty of universal beneficence, we have in the parable of the Good Samaritan! What a lesson we have on

our responsibilities in the parable of the Talents ! What a fulness of meaning we have in the parable of the Vine and its branches !

And how clear, and touching too, are the bulk of Christ's occasional sayings ! " Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother." " Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." " The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." " I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." " Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." " He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ! Thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not." " O that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that make for thy peace ; but now they are hid from thine eyes." In words so simple and tender, truth comes to our hearts with overpowering force.

There are some discourses and sayings recorded in the Gospel of John, which are not quite so plain ; but the greater part of the contents even of that

Gospel, are not only perfectly clear, but remarkably full of most important meaning.

I am aware that there are people who find many things even in the first three Gospels hard to be understood; but the cause is, they are afraid to take Christ's words in their plain and obvious sense. Many divines and commentators have treated the Gospels, as the Scribes and Pharisees treated the law; they have "made them void." They have taken the sense out of them, and have put into them something of their own, which is not sense. "They have darkened counsel by words without knowledge." Instead of opening the treasures of truth, they have used the keys entrusted to them to lock them up. They have made the impression on the minds of many, that the words of Christ do not mean what they say; and do not say what they mean; but mean something else, the opposite of what they say. They have explained them so much that they have made them unintelligible, except to children, and simple-minded, unlearned people, whose souls have never been perverted by false theological teaching. In two or three cases Jesus tells people what they must do to obtain eternal life, and He does so in the plainest language possible; but the commentators step in and explain His words, and in an instant they are incomprehensible. I have looked at fifty explanations of the conversation between Jesus and the Lawyer, as recorded in the tenth of Luke,

and nine out of ten of them are as dark as night. We may say of those expositors, as Jesus said of their fathers; "They be blind leaders of the blind." They have light enough of a certain kind, but it is of the kind that has become darkness; and "how great is that darkness." When I leave the commentators, and look at the words of Christ in Christ's own light, their meaning is as clear as day, and it is rich besides in all the treasures of wisdom, and love, and blessing.

Jesus uses the simplest words. He employs the simplest figures. He borrows His illustrations from things with which all are acquainted, and uses them with the greatest skill. Learned illustrations, borrowed from things with which only scholars are acquainted, are, to those who are not scholars, no illustrations at all, but obscurations. Instead of helping the humble hearer or reader, they embarrass and bewilder him. They make discourses tedious, and instead of begetting a liking for them, they cause people to turn away from them in disgust. Jesus steered clear of this foolish and pedantic error. His words conveyed His thoughts direct to His hearers' hearts. His congregations listened with delight, and understood with ease. Truth filled their souls, it excited their affections, it roused their consciences, it changed their hearts, it transformed their characters. His doctrine, like the light, while clear itself, made all things clear on which it shone, and all around was day. In

simplicity and plainness therefore, as well as in other respects, Jesus is our model. We walk in the light while we walk with Him, and His light is the light of life.

CHAPTER IV.

JESUS CARRIED OUT HIS PRINCIPLES IN HIS LIFE.

ANOTHER peculiarity in Jesus was, that He lived in accordance with His own teachings. His life was a running comment on all He said. His character was a living embodiment of His precepts. Even His loftiest lessons shone forth with double splendor in His godlike deeds. He was not only holy, harmless, and undefiled,—a lamb without blemish and without spot,—but perfect in all moral and spiritual excellence. Hence He could say to His hearers, “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” And He could say to His disciples, after having taken the form of a servant, and washed their feet, “Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” Hence the apostles could exhort their

brethren to be followers of Christ,—to let that mind be in them which was also in Christ Jesus, and to walk as He also walked.

This perfect consistency between the teaching and the conduct of Jesus, was a peculiarity of the utmost importance. Examples make duty plain. You may talk to a man for hours and not make him properly understand what you would have him do ; but if you do the thing before his eyes, he understands you at once. When traveling in strange places, I often have to ask my way, and people as a rule are very ready to direct me ; but I can seldom understand their directions. And often the first part of their instructions slips out of my mind, before the latter portion has had time to enter. Yet they generally end by saying, The way is very plain ; you cannot miss it : and I generally end by finding that I cannot hit it. If they say, “ We are going that way ourselves, and we will show you the place ; ” my mind is at rest. And so it is in religion. You may talk to people for months about the way to heaven, and if you do nothing more than talk, they will know as much about it when you leave off, as they did when you began. But *walk* in the way before their eyes,—become their leader as well as their counsellor, and the difficulty is at an end. You cannot teach a man farming by lectures or books ; but take him into the field, and let him see you at work, and take part with you, and he learns with ease. And

so with trades ; you cannot teach them by words ; you must give your lessons in all of them by deeds. Words are good, *right* words, when deeds accompany or follow them ; but apart from deeds, they are little better than wind.

Good deeds sooner arrest attention than mere words. A preacher may talk for years, and even say good things, and yet remain unnoticed ; but let him risk his life to save a drowning child, or brave death by carrying relief to a plague-infected house, and his name is on the tongues of all the people in the neighborhood.

Deeds are more easily remembered than words. You may preach about charity for weeks, and not a sentence of your sermons shall be kept in memory ; but build an almshouse, or found a library, or make a feast for your needy neighbors, and it shall be remembered to the day of your death, and be spoken of to your praise by following generations. The poor widow with her two mites, and the woman that did what she could with her box of ointment, will be talked about forever ; while all the fine words of the Scribes and Pharisees are lost in eternal forgetfulness.

Then again ; men will more readily listen to your words, when your teachings and your life are in harmony. They loathe the talk of dishonest and inconsistent men, while they listen to the words of a good man with delight.

A good example *moves* people sooner, and moves

them more powerfully, than mere words. Talk of charity, and men listen with comparative indifference ; but share your last loaf with the hungry, or give even a surplus coat to a shivering stranger, and the beholder is moved to the depths of his soul. Even words, if they tell a story of self-sacrificing generosity, touch you sooner than words that simply exhort you to be generous. I am pleased with the beautiful sentiments which I read in the Psalms and Proverbs on pity for the poor ; but when I read the account of Job's generosity, as given in the twenty-ninth and thirty-first chapters of the Book which goes under his name, I am melted to tears.

A good example makes it easier for people to *do* their duty, as well as to understand it. It convinces them that the thing is possible. It inclines them to try to do it. Men are prone to imitation, and a good example, especially when presented by one whom they greatly revere and love, has a mighty power of attraction. How ready children are to imitate their parents : and something of the same disposition remains in us even to our riper age. Children learn to do almost everything by example. They learn to talk, they learn to sing, they learn to walk, they learn to work, they learn to pray, they learn to preach by imitation. And so it is, to a great extent, with men and women. One of the mightiest powers on earth in forming or modifying their characters is prevailing customs and surrounding examples.

People will imitate good deeds, when they will not obey good precepts. They will do as their teachers and preachers *do*, when they will not do as they *say*. And it is probable that the example of Christ and His disciples had as much to do in converting the nations, as the wonderful doctrines which they preached, and the miraculous deeds which they wrought.

And both Jesus and His Apostles taught people to let their light shine before men by their good works, if they would bring men to glorify their Heavenly Father. It was by the good works of the Christians which they should behold, that Peter expected the Gentiles to be brought to God. It was by the well-doing of the members of the Church that he expected the ignorance and infidelity of foolish men to be put to silence. And still, if Christian ministers would convert sinners, or convince unbelievers, they must preach to their eyes as well as to their ears. Faith comes by hearing, it is true, but in many cases it comes more surely and more speedily by seeing. And this is a kind of seeing which men have a right to expect and demand of religious teachers. What Thomas demanded was *not* reasonable, and Jesus might well say, "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: but blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." But the demand for good examples from moral and religious teachers is reasonable and proper in the

highest degree, and blessed are both they who offer and they who see them. Logic is good, and rhetoric is good, and learning and science are good ; and all may be used to good service in the cause of truth and righteousness. But of all good things, and of all mighty things, the best and the mightiest for a teacher of religion, who would arouse and regenerate mankind, is holy, ardent, self-sacrificing love, exhibiting itself in generous deeds, and in meek and patient suffering, for a sinful and unhappy world. Learning, science, logic, eloquence, refinement, culture, all are nothing compared with the labors and sufferings, the prayers and tears, the agony and death of pure and patient, meek, and unconquerable, and boundless love. An example of love like this is the mightiest power on earth for the conversion and salvation of mankind.

And this is the kind of example we have in Jesus. His life, His labors, His prayers, His tears, His meekness and patience, His sufferings and death, form the most perfect exemplification of divine and human love that the heart of man can conceive.

Alas, alas, that we should be so incompetent to do this blessed example justice ! But the Gospels are there, and you can read them for yourselves ; and they will tell you the touching and the tragic story of the Saviour, as nothing else can tell it ; and they portray the glories of His character as no one on earth, however excellent an artist he may be, can ever hope to paint them.

Jesus was exemplary in all His relations, both to God and man.

1. He was devout. He lived in constant intercourse, and in the most intimate fellowship, with His Heavenly Father. His breath, His life, His soul were prayer and praise. He was resigned to His Father's will. It is true that in His great agony, when in prospect of the most appalling death, He prayed that, if it were possible, the cup of bitterness might pass from Him; yet He ended by saying, 'Father, not My will, but Thine be done.' Though rejected by His people, and slandered and persecuted by His enemies, and misunderstood by His friends, and betrayed by one of His disciples, and deserted by the rest, and mocked and derided by the ministers of the law, and struck, and spit upon, and scourged, He never murmured. When He was reviled, He reviled not again: when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Never was there so perfect an exhibition of meekness and piety before, since the world began.

2. He was an example of perfect love and beneficence to men. He sympathized with all in distress, and was eager to afford them relief. He lived for the welfare of mankind. Love was His ruling passion, and beneficence His one employment. He "went about doing good." This was His work. He healed the sick, He cleansed the lepers; He gave sight to the blind, and hearing to

the deaf, and speech to the dumb, and bread to the famishing, and life to the dead. He did good to men's souls as well as their bodies. He instructed the ignorant, He corrected the erring, He rebuked the bad, and comforted the sorrowing. He sought and saved the lost. This was His highest aim, and His special endeavor, the salvation of mankind. His life was one long labor of love. His death was the fullest and most overpowering manifestation of love that God could give, or man receive. And this was the crowning act of His ministry. Virtue could go no farther. This last great display of self-sacrificing love, makes the glory of His character complete, and the power of His Gospel irresistible. For it is impossible to look at Christ as presented in the Gospel, and to continue looking, without being changed into the same image, as by the Spirit of God.

And in this, as in so many other particulars, Jesus stands alone. Of the Scribes and Pharisees of His day, it was said, "They say, and do not." The burdens they laid on others, they would not move themselves with one of their fingers. The teachers among the Gentiles were not much better. Many of them regarded virtue as a subject for speculation and disputation, rather than for practice; and they seem not to have considered themselves disgraced by teaching one thing and doing another. They were more noted for fine words, than for noble deeds. They wrote well, and lived ill. They

taught superiority to sensual pleasure, yet lived in luxury and sensual license. Some of them practised the grossest abominations. Even the best of them do not appear to have been blameless.

And many even among nominal Christians have sinned in the same way. They have taught one thing, and practised another. They have talked about duty, and repeated Christian precepts, while nothing of the majesty and glory of Christian virtue and piety has appeared in their characters. We do not wonder at this. It is just what a knowledge of human nature would teach us to expect. Besides, the law of Christ is so perfect, so broad and so high, that it is no more wonder that men should fail to meet its requirements in all their fulness, than it is that men of science should fail to grasp the universe of truth. It is to the glory of Christianity that it requires such vigorous, such constant and long-continued efforts on our part, to bring us up to the fulness of its requirements. But Jesus, on His first appearance, shines forth in all the glory of perfect moral excellence. He is the light of the world; a sun without a shadow and without a spot. And His virtue takes such forms of tenderness, it exhibits itself in such strange and startling displays of eager, unrestrained, self-sacrificing sympathy, that it melts our hearts, and purifies our souls, as by the power of God.

CHAPTER V.

JESUS WAS SINGLE-MINDED.

WE add, though it can hardly seem necessary, that Jesus, in all He said and did, was single-minded. He had but one object, and that the highest, the noblest conceivable,—the salvation of mankind. To this He gave Himself without reserve. For this He labored, for this He preached, for this He suffered, and for this He died. He had no regard for wealth, or ease, or sensual pleasure. He had no desire for rank, or fame, or power. All these things were offered to Him, but He rejected them as beneath His notice. And He never wavered. It was His meat and drink to do the will of His Father, and to finish His work; and to this alone He gave Himself. And He could say, as He drew near to the end of His life, “Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work Thou didst give me to do.” And in this, too, Jesus was singular.

With regard to the character and aims of many professors of religion and ministers of the Gospel, you are left in doubt. You see in them a number of aims, and you cannot tell which ranks highest. You see them actuated by a variety of motives, and you cannot tell which is the ruling one. And

often you feel afraid that the object which should be first, is last; and that the motive which should be mightiest, is weakest. You see earth and heaven, God and self, thoughts of beneficence and thoughts of pleasure, of gain and of ambition, all blending together, and you cannot tell which prevails. You have no such doubts or fears about Christ. In Him it is as plain as the light, the ruling passion is love, and the one great object and business of His life to save and bless the world.

CHAPTER VI.

JESUS SPAKE WITH AUTHORITY.

JESUS spake with authority, and not as the Scribes. The Scribes spake what they had received from their elders, or read in books, and their words were powerless. They were parrots, repeating what they did not understand. They were dealers in words, not things. They had not tested their doctrine, either by investigation or by experience, so that they were unable to speak with assurance. They raged often and were confident, like Solomon's fool, but they were not assured. They were able actors, but they could not mimic the majesty and power of a great good soul. Their oracles were hollow. Their manner was

unnatural. Their words were wind. Christ was *real*. His manner was natural. He did not cry, or raise His voice above its natural pitch, or affect unnatural strains of eloquence, but simply talked, as one who felt the truth and importance of what He said. He knew that the things which He taught were eternal realities. He had gone to the bottom of things, and placed His soul on the solid and unchangeable rock; hence He spake without misgivings. He had no fear that any one would ever find a flaw in His statements, or prove anything He said to be untrue. He had the same clear perception, and the same unqualified assurance with regard to things moral and spiritual, that men generally have with regard to things sensible, and He spake accordingly. God, and the spiritual world, and the law of righteousness, were present to His soul in all their solemn reality, and unspeakable power and grandeur: and what He felt He uttered. His words were truth. They expressed exactly what was, and what He felt and knew; neither more nor less. Hence He retracted nothing. He corrected nothing. His utterances were final. It was not in sounds, or echoes, or fancies, or fictions, or guesses, or vanities of any kind that He dealt; but in eternal truth,—*felt* truth. His assurance was absolute. His hearers felt that it was, as well as Himself, and they were awed, they were overpowered. They felt they had come in contact with almighty-

ness. His looks and His manner preached, as well as His words. As the Apostle John intimates, men *saw* as well as *heard* the word of life,—they *felt*, they *handled* it. God and His truth, God and His law, were made manifest through Him to their whole being. They became conscious of a new sense,—a living sense,—of the real in matters spiritual.

His hearers were amazed. They wondered at the gracious words which fell from His lips. Even the emissaries of the Pharisees were constrained to say, when they returned to those who sent them, “Never man spake like this man.” And even a Scribe that strayed into His presence was so overcome, that he exclaimed, “Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.” “The common people heard Him gladly.” They love sound truth. Some even of the rulers came to hear Him. The whole nation was excited. His words took such a hold on men’s hearts, that they never could be forgotten. His enemies were enraged, and at length, in their frenzy, put Him to death. But they could not destroy His cause. His word grew mightily and prevailed. “It ran and was glorified.” It not only filled Jerusalem and all Judea, but spread through foreign lands. It conquered Pagan nations. It triumphed everywhere, proving the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed. And it still works on, changing the hearts and reforming the lives of

men, and making all things new. Like its great Author, and like the eternal realities which it represents, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the incorruptible, immortal Word of God. Such are the life, the power, the deathless energy of the words of a true preacher, who is consciously one with God, and one with eternal truth.

There is nothing like this power and majesty in the writings of the ancient philosophers. They speak with hesitation. They doubt. They reason, and are often unable to decide which view of the subject they have under consideration is the true one. Some doubt everything. Some discuss everything, but decide nothing. Some make doubt or indecision a virtue. They recommend it to their disciples. Some caution their disciples against resting on their authority. They recommend independence. The best, the wisest of them spake with uncertainty, even on matters of the greatest moment. Hence their doctrine had little practical power. It moved, it melted, it overpowered no one. It transformed no one. It led to no great revival of religion or virtue. It inspired no zeal for the reformation of the world. It led to no blending of hearts, no living union of those who were virtuously and piously disposed. There was no great central attraction to bring the children of truth and love together. The doctrine had no principle of life. It had no irresistible tendency to spread. It could not perpetuate itself.

Instead of shining on like the sun, or even like some bright particular star, it flashed like a meteor only, and then went out in darkness.

The doctrine remains in books, just as the Christian doctrine does, but it makes no converts, it forms no community, it saves no souls. The mighty rulers in the world of thought have been dethroned by the Teacher from Galilee, or have abdicated in favor of the CRUCIFIED, and Jesus rules alone.

CHAPTER VII.

JESUS WAS KIND TO THE POOR.

ANOTHER peculiarity in Jesus, worthy of our admiration and imitation, was His great regard for the poor. Up to His time the poor had been generally neglected, and grievously wronged. Among the Gentiles, they were regarded as inferior creatures, made for the service or the pleasure of their superiors, and were used as slaves, or tools, to till the rich man's grounds, and fight the rich man's battles. It was so among the Greeks and Romans, the most polished nations of antiquity. It was so throughout the world at large.

In Sparta, famed for her courage, nineteen out of twenty of the whole population were slaves,—

slaves of the most abject kind, having no rights, no property, no protection. They were slaughtered by the youthful aristocrats without compunction, and tortured without redress. The lot of the poor in the other states of Greece, was not much better. The great mass of the population among the Romans were slaves, and the wrongs and cruelties to which they were subjected, were horrible beyond description. In every country the lot of the poor was one of hardship and sorrow. The very word poverty means want, and weakness, and hopeless suffering.

The law of Moses interposed in behalf of the poor, endeavoring by a number of merciful provisions to protect them from wrong, and to abate their sufferings. It did not abolish or forbid slavery, but it sought to reduce its hardships to the lowest point, and to prepare the way for its ultimate abolition. It had a fugitive slave law, which, instead of requiring those to whom the slave fled to return him to his master, forbade them to return him, and commanded them to allow him to abide under their protection. And the Psalms, and the Proverbs, and the writings of the Prophets, all plead the cause of the poor, and threaten the most terrible punishments against their oppressors. And there is reason to believe that those regulations of the Mosaic law, and the influence of the great good men in the Jewish nation, did much to improve the poor man's

lot. Other regulations did much to protect from wrong and ruin the fatherless and the widow.

Yet still the condition of the poor, even among the Jews, was one of great suffering. And even now, in nations called Christian, so far as the people remain under the influence of the spirit and principles of Heathenism, the poor are the victims of neglect and cruelty. In many countries they are still slaves, and in others, where they are no longer the property of individuals, they are regarded as the property of the State, and are oppressed and plundered without mercy. Till lately the laws even of Great Britain, kept millions of her toiling population on the verge of starvation, to increase the incomes of the land-owners. In Ireland, till lately, want and starvation were the common lot of vast multitudes. And it is not a century since slavery was abolished in the Northern States of America, while in the South it seems but like yesterday that the system was drowned in blood. In some of the greatest empires in Europe the lot of the poor is hard work, poor fare, and constant exposure to wrong, and suffering, and untimely death.

The poor are the chief sufferers in famines, wars, and plagues. While there is food the rich can buy it, and the strong can take it by force; while the poor are left to languish in want, or perish of starvation. In plagues the rich can protect themselves to some extent, in their isolated

dwellings, or flee from the infected districts ; while the poor are left to perish. And even in war, the wealthy can often contrive to place the poor between themselves and death.

In the days of Jesus the lot of the poor was deplorable in the extreme. In almost every country on earth, they were held in bondage, and were subject to the greatest cruelties. They were "born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward."

Yet the poor were the many. They formed the bulk of our race. They do so still. And they are as dear to God as the rich. And they are as capable of religious improvement, of moral and spiritual excellence, and of heavenly blessedness. The poor are more easily won than the rich. They are sooner touched with proofs of love. They are enthusiastic in behalf of a benefactor. And they tell each other of the slightest manifestation of sympathy with their class. And they move each other,—they go in flocks, crowding the path of a generous leader. And the poor are often more free from vicious passions, from filthy lusts, from slavery to fashion, and from undue regard to other people's thoughts about them, than the rich.

They are, in consequence, more disposed to listen to new truths. They are more readily convinced. They are more easily persuaded. They are more ready to impart what they learn to others. They more easily unite for mutual improvement, and for general usefulness. And they

have often great powers of mind, and a vast amount of generous feeling. Many of our greatest scholars, of our profoundest philosophers, of our ablest speakers, of our best writers, of our most zealous reformers, of our most devoted philanthropists, and of our most laborious and successful benefactors of the world generally, have come from the poor. In blessing the poor therefore, you bless the world. In neglecting the poor, you neglect the world. In converting the poor, you convert the world. And the poor, when converted, often become rich, and in some cases use their riches for God and the welfare of their brethren. They rise to power. They become the teachers and the rulers of nations. They determine the destiny of their race.

Yet the rich, and the great, and the wise, among the heathen left them to their fate. The Gentile moralists never appear to have thought for one moment of teaching and elevating the toiling classes. The idea of raising them to a higher life than that of the flesh, or to a happier lot than that of the slave, seems never to have entered their minds. They did not even dream of procuring for them protection from oppression and cruelty, and a reasonable supply of their bodily wants.

Turn now from this melancholy picture to that of Jesus. Jesus made the poor His special charge. He preached to them the Gospel. He spoke to them of the establishment of a better government,

the reign of Heaven. He gave them hints of a new society, a new kingdom, in which all should be as brothers; and He opened to them a prospect of eternal life, and of great and never-failing happiness. He chose to be poor Himself, the poorest of the poor, that He might the better win their confidence, and gain their sympathy. He lived among them, and shared their sorrows. He chose His more intimate friends from among the poor, and entrusted to them the great task of preaching His Gospel, and carrying forward His work in the world. He made them feel that He was indeed, as none before Him had been, the poor man's friend, and the poor man's Saviour. The response of the poor showed the wisdom of his course. They gathered round Him in immense crowds, and listened to His words with the greatest delight. They took Him to their homes, and they took Him to their hearts. They were not sufficiently enlightened to enter properly into His elevated views, and clearly to understand His great un-earthly plans, but they loved Him, and had faith in Him, and showed such enthusiasm in His favor, that several times they alarmed and discomfited His enemies, who sought to take Him and put Him to death. And though their misconception of His work, and their consequent disappointment when He was arrested and crucified, staggered them for a time, they soon rallied, and became the bulk of the members of the early Church.

Recruits from the ranks of the poor have formed the majority of the members of the Church in all ages. The poor have formed the mass of converts in all revivals. They have formed the bulk of all new religious societies. They have supplied the greater portion of the preachers and missionaries, and of Christian laborers of all kinds. The founders of new and reformed religious communities have been from the poor. Luther was a beggar boy. John Wesley was a charity scholar. Whitefield was the same. George Fox was a shoemaker. The Pilgrim Fathers were not Bishops or princes. The founders of the last great Methodist body in England, the most laborious, self-sacrificing, and useful of all, were poor plain working-men. And still the poor are the hope of the world, and will form the bulk of the subjects of God's kingdom through all the ages to come.

But Jesus never flattered the poor. He never pandered to their prejudices or passions. He never taught them to envy or abuse the rich. He never encouraged them to rebel against established authorities, and to overthrow governments. He never preached discontentment or violence. He never encouraged the poor to lay the blame of their faults or vices on society, or countenanced the notion that they could never be any better till society was reorganized. He never hinted that men were the slaves of circumstances, and that the poor could never be good till they were favored

with ease and plenty. He taught that if they gave themselves heartily to the service of God, He would take care they had all things needful to their welfare, both in time and eternity. And it has been proved, past doubt, that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

CHAPTER VIII.

JESUS CONSIDERATE TO THE RICH.

WHILE Jesus was kind to the poor, He showed all proper consideration for the rich. He treated them with respect and civility; and even with courtesy and tenderness. There was nothing harsh in his treatment of Nicodemus or Zaccheus. And He all but wept over the rich young man that came so near to the kingdom, and yet lacked courage and decision to enter. He showed a just estimation of the well-disposed Roman centurion, and bare testimony to his deserts before all the people. True, He warned the rich of their danger—warned them faithfully,—but He did it lovingly. He never tried to drive them away from His ministrations by unnecessary harshness; though He was resolved that they should never enter His

kingdom but by the proper door, and that they should never perish through any want of faithful dealing on His part. His sermons to the rich are the most wonderful mixtures of truth and love, of faithfulness and true philosophy, to be found on earth.

CHAPTER IX.

JESUS THE FRIEND OF ALL CLASSES.

JESUS had no prejudices against any class of men. He was thought by His countrymen to lean to the opposite extreme. Men and women of all nationalities shared His good-will, and participated both in His religious instructions, and in His miraculous benefits. He heard the prayer of the Syrophœnician mother in behalf of her afflicted daughter, and though He tried her for a time, He at last, not only granted her request, but dismissed her with a generous commendation. He never seems to have missed an opportunity of befriending a Samaritan, and He never failed to notice any display of virtue by one of that hated people. He commended the faith of the Roman centurion in the highest terms. His heart was as wide as the world. He was the friend, the brother, the Saviour, not of a class, or of a country, but of mankind. And His doctrine and

religion were adapted to men of all classes and of all climes, and of all peculiarities of mental and moral constitution.

CHAPTER X.

JESUS AND THE OUTCASTS.

ANOTHER peculiarity of Jesus was, that He was kind to the outcasts of society, to the abandoned and flagrant sinners, whom the Scribes and Pharisees looked upon as lost past hope, and of whose reformation and elevation the Pagan moralists never dreamed. Jesus went among them and preached to them, and showed the tenderest concern for their welfare. He said they were the people He specially came to seek and to save. He had hopes of their conversion, and His hopes were happily realized. Numbers of those poor creatures, touched with His condescension, and amazed at the interest He took in their welfare, flocked around Him to hear His words, and were brought to repentance. They renounced their evil ways, and began to walk in newness of life. He received them into the number of His followers. Some of them became His constant attendants, and His most steadfast and devoted friends. The Scribes and Pharisees reproached Him for identi-

fyng Himself with such people. They thought He ought to confine Himself to respectable society, and surround Himself with people of the higher classes. Jesus justifies Himself against their complaints in the most triumphant manner. He says to them, in effect: "A physician's business is with the sick. If he would discharge the duties of his calling he must forego the society of the healthy, however agreeable, and spend his time among the afflicted. I am the physician of souls. My business is to cure men of their moral and spiritual diseases, and save them from impending death. Those that are well can take care of themselves, but the sick require attention, and my duty is to keep by their side, and afford them the most effectual aid I can."

In the parables of the Lost Sheep and of the Prodigal Son, He shows that what the Scribes and Pharisees regarded as unbecoming and blameable, was, in truth, most honorable and praiseworthy; and that however offensive it might be to the proud ones of earth, it was in the highest degree pleasing to the spirits of Heaven. "While you are murmuring," says He, "God and the blessed spirits with whom He is surrounded, are rejoicing. For there is more joy in the presence of God over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh; and never did shepherd love his sheep, as God loves the souls

of men. And never was shepherd so joyful at the recovery of a sheep that had been lost, as God is at the recovery of a soul that had fallen under the power of sin. The spirits of Heaven look down on you with pity and grief; while on Me, employed in seeking and saving the lost, they look down with approbation and delight."

In His parable of the Two Sons, one of whom promised everything and did nothing, while the other promised nothing and did everything, He gives His proud and selfish opponents to understand, that He had a better opinion, and more hopes, of the unpromising classes than He had of them. "Bad as they may seem," said He, "they are better than those who treat them with contempt, who look down on them with abhorrence, and are unable to rejoice in their conversion. And high as you may stand in your own estimation, those wretched-looking outcasts stand higher in the esteem of Heaven than you."

And in all this, Jesus was right. His conduct was the perfection of wisdom and goodness.

He was right in teaching that those who are the greatest sinners in appearance, are not always the guiltiest criminals in the sight of God,—that fair-seeming Pharisees may be more deserving of blame, than open and reckless profligates.

In estimating the guilt of an offender before God, we must take into account, not only the outward life, but the inward disposition. And we must also

take into account the peculiarities of men's mental and moral constitutions, differences of situation and temptation, and of birth and education. The man with great powers and strong passions, must not be considered as equally responsible with the man of feeble powers and gentler dispositions. And the man whose education is neglected, or conducted on vicious principles, must not be supposed to have as much to answer for as the man who is educated with the greatest care, and on the best and wisest principles. And the man who is born into abandoned society, and who grows up under vicious influences, is not to be expected to exhibit the same moral qualities as the man who is born in a happy home, and reared in decent society. The guilt of the latter, if *he* becomes a profligate, may be immeasurably greater than that of the transgressor reared under the greatest disadvantages. Jesus knew all this, and hence His lenity and tenderness in dealing with the outcast classes.

The outcasts are, in many cases, more to be pitied than blamed. They are often the victims of neglect, or of a bad education. In some cases their sins are chargeable on the faithlessness and inconsistencies of the very men who treat them with contempt, or look down on them with loathing. If they had been properly looked after by their spiritual overseers, they might have been found among the most godly and useful members of society.

Many poor creatures grow up from babyhood to manhood, and never hear, from either father or mother, a single lesson in Christian truth or duty. Many hear religion and religious people spoken of with contempt. How few behold in the people around them, examples of Christian virtue and piety. A child left to itself brings its mother to shame. But many are worse than left to themselves. They are left to the guidance of men who cause them to err, and encourage them to sin. They are taught to put good for evil and evil for good. They are trained by teachers who instruct them in evil, both by precept and example, and enforce their lessons with relentless severity.

Can we wonder if such persons prove reckless and godless? Or can we think of them without pity? Are we sure, that while our outward conduct has been much less revolting, we have not incurred a greater amount of guilt than those poor unfortunates? And shall we pass the poor creatures by as beneath our notice, and leave them to perish unhelped?

Then allowance has to be made for peculiarities of constitution. Some are born with a fulness of life and power, which makes them almost uncontrollable; and if they do not fall under favorable influences, they become troublesome and unruly to the last degree. But the most troublesome children are not always the worst. They frequently make the best and the ablest men. When they

are brought under proper control, their surplus energy only impels them onward the more forcibly in the path of improvement, and makes them the more abundant in useful labors. And so it is with many of the troublesome and dreaded members of society. They have not worse hearts than less flagrant sinners, but only more energy, which, so long as they are strangers to religion, must spend itself in lawless deeds. But when they are brought under Christian influences, their boundless activity will spend itself in generous labors. The greater the man the greater the sinner, while under the power of the evil one, but the greater the saint, when brought under the power of Jesus. The richest soil, when neglected, produces the rankest weeds. But when cultivated and sown with proper seed, it yields the richest crops of grain. And those hearts that are richest in generous feelings, and active energies, will, when left to themselves, produce the rankest vices; but when brought under heavenly influences, they will produce the richest and most abundant fruits of righteousness.

Some soils are too barren to produce respectable weeds; and these, cultivate them as you will, will never yield you heavy crops of grain. And some men have not manhood enough in them to make great sinners; and these, however soundly they may be converted, can never make distinguished saints. Some, like Paul, will be great whatever

form they take. If they are sinners, they will be the chief of sinners, so far as outward appearances are concerned ; and if they are saints, they will be the chief of saints, and that not in appearance only, but in reality. If they persecute, they will persecute like devils ; and if they preach they will preach like angels. They will do, and dare, and suffer for Christ as much as a thousand ordinary men. And so it is all through.

The richest farms, and the most fruitful orchards, in some parts of England, were formed from swamps, and fens, and shallow pools, which once produced only vermin, fever, and ague. The elements which once produced disease and death, are the same that now produce so abundantly the means of life and enjoyment. And some of the men that now are doing most for God and His truth, are men who once spent their breath in blasphemy, and their strength in sin ; and some of those who labor hardest in the cause of temperance, are men who formerly were the most wretched slaves of drunkenness.

The great sinners as they are sometimes called, have often great powers,—great power of thought, great power of feeling, great activity of mind, and vast capacities of improvement. The probability is, that there is as much talent among the outcasts, badly as it is employed, as among the orderly and reputable classes. It is certain that bankers and brokers, and merchants and aristocrats, find it

more than they can do at times, to secure themselves against their ingenuity. And when they think they have guarded themselves at every point, they are startled to find themselves the victims of some new device. That world outside the world is a wonderful sphere of ingenuity and toil, of discipline and self-control, of costly sacrifice and patient endurance.

Many of the outcasts are among the most patient, watchful, self-denying, hard-working creatures on the face of the earth. And their daring is wonderful. They are real heroes in their way, and if it were not for the change which Christianity has produced in men's way of judging, they would be honored by many, and praised in song, as the noted outlaws of the middle ages were, and the thieves and plunderers of ancient Heathenism.

And many poor outcasts have good natural dispositions, strong natural affections, and generous impulses. Even the poor abandoned woman is not always a mass of unmixed vice. And many drunkards had generous qualities when they began their dreadful journey down to degradation; and remnants of virtue still show themselves at times in combination with their deadly vices. And among them, too, we see wrecks of genius and taste, and learning and science, and poetry and eloquence, all waiting to be rescued from their unnatural enthrallment, and employed in the cause of God.

And we never know how near those outcasts

may be to a better life. That egg, which looks so lifeless, may have within it a living bird, and before to-morrow, if you keep it warm, the hidden life may burst its prison-house, and come forth a marvel of beauty. We read strange stories sometimes about the appearance of unlooked-for qualities among the victims of vice and crime, and are often delightfully surprised by sudden and blessed transformations of character.

We never know what is passing in the hidden depths of the poor outcast's soul. We see her faded form, and we know her way of life, but we little dream of the thoughts, the feelings, and the memories which she carries in her bosom, and which are struggling there for mastery. Nor can we foresee the issue of the struggle. But it is always safe to hope that the good will triumph in the end. This is the lesson that our great Model teaches us, and I have faith in Him.

Again, the great will be great and do great things, and the little will be little and do only little things, whether they be good or evil.

Great thinkers fall into great errors; little thinkers into little errors; while those who never think at all, continue orthodox all their life through. But those who commit the greatest blunders, make the greatest discoveries; while those who commit but ordinary blunders, make but ordinary discoveries. Those who never blunder at all, discover nothing; not even their own ignorance.

All things will act, and produce results, according to their powers. And the best things, when corrupted, become the worst, and the worst when restored to their proper state, become the best. The sweetest wine makes the sourest vinegar, and the richest meat, when putrid, sends forth the most offensive odor. And the best and greatest men, when they fall from God, become the greatest and most mischievous sinners; but the greatest and most mischievous sinners, when converted, become the best, the bravest, and the most useful Christians. Paul was the chief of sinners because the chief of men, and when he became a Christian he was the chief of the Apostles for the same reason. Even when he was a persecutor, his sin was greater in appearance than in reality. The outward act was worse than the inward motive; for He did evil ignorantly in unbelief, verily thinking that he *ought* to persecute the Church of Christ! And many a modern sinner looks worse in the eyes of men than in the eyes of God, for the same reason. Men judge of the wickedness of men by appearances, or by the trouble they give them; but God looks at men's hearts, and measures their guilt by their motives. Some fall into error from their eagerness to discover truth; others escape unpopular errors because they never seek for truth. The first are most offensive to the guardians of the Church's orthodoxy, but the second are most offensive to God. Some become infidels

through their hatred of popular errors, and will return to Christianity when they understand it better, and will love it, and live it, and advocate it all the more passionately, for their temporary experience of the horrors of unbelief.

Those who never travel will never go astray; but men who go on exploring adventures through strange countries, or through unknown realms of truth, will be sure to miss their way at times. But when they discover their errors, they may be better guides to travellers, than those who sit idly at home all the while.

I hardly know how some may take it, but I confess I like the Prodigal Son on the whole, better than his brother. He sinned greatly, but he repented gloriously; while the other did nothing grandly. Some say that repentance, such repentance as that of the Prodigal Son, is a greater wonder than continuance in righteousness, and that it requires and evinces more virtue. Whether this be really the case or not, I cannot tell; but the repentance of a sinner is a glorious thing, or God and His Angels would never make it the occasion of such wonderful rejoicing.

And in any case Jesus was right in His love of the outcasts; and if there were nothing else in His character entitling Him to special esteem, I would love Him, and praise Him for that with all my soul, and love Him and praise Him forever.

And I would follow His example. I would

gather as many of the outcasts into His house as possible. I know the history of one poor outcast, and I would give a world if I could bring the rest to share the blessedness that He enjoys.

It is a sad thing, when Churches and ministers give up the outcasts, or come to the conclusion that they cannot be saved. It is a bad sign when principles are adopted that withdraw the action of the Church and ministry from the abandoned classes, and require it to be directed chiefly to the favored classes. "O Light of the world, guide Thou our goings, and save us from unfaithfulness to Thee."

Those who have sinned against fewer privileges are more easily converted than those who have sinned against many. And the flagrant sins which afflict men's bodies, and bring them loss and shame, and make them hateful to themselves, are less obstructions to conversion than the fashionable vices which entail on the sinner no serious loss or inconvenience. So I toil in hope. Like oysters, those poor unhappy creatures have hard cases, but they are soft and sensitive within. And there are soft spots in the hearts of the most abandoned of men and women. The ugliest worms are but undeveloped butterflies, which, after a time, if placed under proper influences, will escape from their withered cases, and mount aloft on wings of gold and silver. And those poor repulsive-looking and unpromising outcasts, under the transforming

power of Christian love, may become saints, apostles and martyrs. It was so in the days of Jesus, and it has been so under the ministry of all who have had much of His spirit, and who have faithfully followed His example. It was so under the ministry of Wesley and Whitefield. It has been eminently so under the ministry of the Primitive Methodists. And it is so still, and it will always be so, under ministers of a thoroughly Christian character.

CHAPTER XI.

JESUS AND WOMAN.

ANOTHER important peculiarity in Jesus, entitling Him to our love and admiration was, His great regard for the interests of woman.

1. Women form one half of our race, so that their comfort and welfare are matters of the greatest importance. Some say that women form the *better* half of our race, and whether that be the case or not, it is certain that the other half would find their existence a very doubtful blessing, if not an intolerable curse, without woman. It certainly is not good for man to be alone. It never was, and it never will be. If man were doomed to live alone, he would soon come to regard it as a

thing to be prayed for, that he might cease to live at all. Even in Paradise man began to feel very uncomfortable, when he found that every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, had its mate, but that there was no fit mate provided for him. And if man could not get along comfortably in Paradise without woman, where his body was a stranger to disease and pain, and his food hung ready for his use on every tree,—where every shady grove could serve him for a home, and every mossy bank for a bed, what could he do without woman in a world like this?

Man is dependent on woman for every comfort and blessing that he enjoys. Even those who live in what they playfully or wickedly call single blessedness, owe all the little blessedness they enjoy to the influence which woman exerts, and the part which she performs in society at large. A man may live without eyes in a community in which others have eyes; but what would he do in a community in which *all* were blind? So a man may get along in some way without a wife, in a world where others have wives, and where good kind women abound; but what would he do in a world in which wives and women were unknown? We repeat it, man is dependent on woman for all the comfort he enjoys. He owes his life at first to woman's love, and he is dependent for all that gives it value on woman's care.

And man cannot be happy even with woman,

unless woman herself be happy. Man cannot be made happy by woman, when woman herself is miserable. She cannot cheer and comfort him, if she herself be cheerless and comfortless. If *one* is to be happy, *both* must be happy. Their welfare and their bliss are one. They rise or fall, they sink or swim, they rejoice or weep, they live or die together. Her welfare therefore is the welfare of the world. Her happiness is the happiness of the world ; and her misery is the misery of the world.

2. Man can neither be good nor happy, nor be at all, without the help and care of woman. He cannot be wise, and leave her foolish ; he cannot be good, and leave her wicked ; he cannot be great, and strong, and free, and leave her little, and weak, and enslaved. If he will improve and elevate himself, he must improve and elevate woman. If he neglects or depresses woman, he will depress and ruin himself. If he corrupts and debases woman, he will corrupt and debase himself. The instruction and elevation of woman, are the instruction and elevation of man. The wretchedness and ruin of woman, are the wretchedness and ruin of man. If woman be made a slave to man's selfish will, man will himself become a slave to his own vile lusts. Their destiny is one. If woman rises, man rises ; if woman falls, man falls. If woman be happy, man cannot be miserable ; if woman be miserable, man cannot be happy. Their

lots are linked indissolubly together. It is God that has joined them, and all the men on earth cannot put them asunder. You cannot have a Purgatory for woman, and a Paradise for man. They must have the same heaven, or the same hell; the same glory, or the same shame; the same bliss, or the same woe. What is refused to woman, is not secured to man. What is given to woman, is not lost to man. On the contrary, what man gives to woman is doubly his own: and what he denies to her is doubly lost.

3. While woman is herself one half the human race, she has the care of the *whole* race during the time of infancy and childhood. She is for a considerable period, and that a period of vast importance, the teacher and trainer of both male and female. And what she makes them during those early years, they will remain, to some extent, through the whole of their lives. And she cannot make them what she herself is not. She cannot give them what she has not got. Her character is the mold in which the infant race is formed, and if the mold be defective, that which is fashioned therein cannot be perfect. And if she has been taught nothing herself, she cannot give much instruction to her children: or if what she has been taught be error, and folly, and sin, it is vain to suppose that what she will teach her children will be virtue, and piety, and true philosophy. God has given to her the making or molding of man-

kind, and she can do no other than make or mold them in her own likeness. As vain therefore would it be to try to benefit the right eye at the expense of the left, or the head at the expense of the body, as to think of benefiting man at the expense of woman.

All this seems clear and plain to us now ; and to some extent, though only to a small extent alas, men act upon this view. Yet Jesus was the first to teach it to mankind. He was the first to show a tender regard to woman, or to attempt to do her justice. He was the first to protest against what we see now to be a great and grievous wrong, an unnatural and most ruinous error. He waked poor woman into life, and liberty, and purity. In all the nations of the earth before the appearance of Jesus in the world, woman was regarded as a being of an inferior order, and treated with indignity and cruelty. To know how woman has fared in the savage state, we have only to look and see how she is treated among the original inhabitants of our own country. Throughout the continent of America, says Robertson, her condition is so grievous, and her depression so complete, that slavery is not a word sufficiently strong to describe her state. A wife, among most of the tribes, is no better than a beast of burden. Tasks are imposed on her without pity, and services received without gratitude. They are not even permitted to eat in the presence of their lords. In

some cases women have felt their condition to be so grievous, that in a wild emotion of motherly tenderness, they have destroyed their female children, to save them from a bondage so intolerable.

Among the savages of Africa, the women are subjected to every sort of drudgery. They dig, they sow, they reap, they cut wood, they grind corn, and fetch water. They toil in the fields and woods till they are ready to faint, while their husbands hang around in idleness. Among the wandering Arabs they card, and spin, and weave, as well as manage the house. They milk the cattle, grind the corn, dress the food, fetch in wood and water, and even take care of their husbands' horses. When on journeys, the poor creatures are dragged along with one child at the breast, and another in a basket; and in the evening, though tired almost to death, instead of being allowed to rest and sleep, they are still kept at work for their unfeeling masters.

Even among the ancient Greeks and Romans, woman was considered as the property of the man, and was left to be treated and disposed of as he might think fit. She might be sold, or lent, or returned to her parents, or turned adrift, without compassion and without hope. Vices were allowed to the men that rendered it next to impossible that they should be good, kind husbands. Everything tended to her degradation. "In the purest ages of Greece and Rome," says Ryan, "it

was lawful to put female children to death, and at a later period, the husband, instead of being the friend of his wife, was a tyrant; and the wife was expected to obey her husband, not from a principle of gratitude or love, but from fear." Some of the laws of Lycurgus in reference to women were disgraceful; and the principles of Plato and Aristotle were no better. In some countries adultery was sanctioned both by law and custom; and polygamy and concubinage were allowed in others. Cruel and causeless divorces were common. Some of the most distinguished characters in the Roman world turned away their wives; and the inhumanity of some of them almost exceeds belief. Everything, in short, that was calculated to afflict and torture the heart of woman, and to sink the female sex in hopeless wretchedness, was allowed; and the lot of woman, from her birth to her death, was insult and wrong, disappointment, degradation, and hopeless grief. And to complete her wretchedness, she was left in the midst of her tears and agonies on earth, without a hope of blessedness in heaven.

The lot of woman among the nations of the East is about as bad as it can be. Among the Mahomedans women are bought and sold like cattle, and shut up in their harems as life-long prisoners. In India their lot is too low and deplorable to be described. The manner in which they are spoken of in their sacred books is disgusting and revolting.

Among the sensual and infidel classes in countries called Christian, the lot of women is, in many cases, about as bad as it can be. They suffer the most grievous indignities and wrongs, and they pass through numberless hardships and sorrows, with no hope of redress in the present world. I have seen in infidel families enough to rend one's heart to pieces. Many, besides being subjected to the grossest and most cruel outrages, are left with their helpless children to want and starvation. Others are deserted by their godless husbands, and left to spend their days, and rear their offspring, alone, amidst the wants and sorrows and humiliations of an unnatural widowhood.

And where woman is abused and wronged, there is no domestic comfort. Among the infidel sensualists, domestic happiness, in its higher forms, is unknown. Those who should be helps and comforts to each other, become plagues and torments; and dwellings that should be the abodes of love and confidence, become the dens of care and fear, of madness and despair. When infidelity and sensuality become general in a city or a country, home-life, in its better forms, entirely disappears. Even when the godless creatures have houses, they have nothing resembling homes; and when they have something like homes, they do not live at them. They *eat* there twice or thrice a day, but their leisure hours they spend elsewhere, leaving their wives, or housekeepers, and their children, to pass their gloomy hours in grief and loneliness.

Jesus appears, the Friend of Woman, and sets Himself to redress her wrongs, to alleviate her sorrows, and to cure the mass of misery with which man's sensualism and heartlessness have embittered her lot. He restores to woman her rights; He raises her from her degradation; He clothes her with grace and dignity, and makes her the free, the happy friend of man, and the joyful mother of children.

The principles which Jesus inculcates, the change which His religion produces in the hearts and lives of men and women, tend to raise both man and woman to the highest state of blessedness possible on earth, and to diffuse through all the relationships of domestic life, the richest delight and satisfaction.

Jesus acknowledges no invidious distinction between male and female. He teaches that both are one flesh and one spirit; that they are alike the offspring of God, and equally dear to their Heavenly Father. In Christ there is neither male nor female; both are one. Both are welcome,—equally welcome,—to the assemblies of the Church, to the throne of grace, and to the treasures of truth in the sacred volume; and both are heirs together of all the blessings of eternal life.

Jesus showed His regard for the rights and interests of woman, and His hostility to the cruel prejudices entertained against her, through the whole course of His ministry. He was the first

great teacher that admitted women among His hearers and disciples. In earlier ages and in other lands men and women had been kept apart. He allows them to mingle together. He threw down the partition walls which separated woman from man, and allowed her to move in society, free from all injurious restraints. He regarded women as of equal value with men. He showed them equal respect. He granted them equal privileges. He laid on them equal responsibilities. He had as much faith in woman's wisdom and sense of propriety as in man's, and He granted her equal advantages. He seems to have had as much faith in woman's virtue as in man's; and on one occasion He intimated that even women who were really sinners, were, in some cases, no worse than their male accusers and persecutors. His words to the heartless creatures who brought before Him the woman taken in adultery, will ring through the earth, and torture the consciences, and perhaps abate the shamelessness, of woman's enemies, to the end of the world. And that story of the penitent outcast, who approached the Saviour in the house of Simon the Pharisee, washing His feet with her tears, and wiping them with the hair of her head, will plead the cause of woman, and fill the hearts of the good with love and reverence and gratitude to Jesus, as long as the Gospel history shall endure.

A writer of the milder type of modern Rationalists,

speaking of the incidents above alluded to, says, "On the first occasion, when the woman taken in adultery was brought before Him, He exhibited a profound delicacy of which there is no other example in the ancient world, and which anticipates and excels all that is noblest in chivalrous, and finest in modern manners." Of the second story he says, "Fragmentary as it is, it is all-important, as the turning-point in the history of women. The female sex, in which antiquity saw nothing but inferiority, which Plato considered intended to do the same things as the male, only not so well, was understood for the first time by Christ. His treatment brought out its characteristics, its superiorities, its peculiar power of gratitude and self-devotion. That woman, who dried with her hair the feet she had bathed in grateful tears, has raised her whole sex to a higher level. It is when we consider the previous life and character of this poor woman, that the prodigious force and originality of Christ's mercy makes itself felt. For it is in cases like hers that hatred of the sin and mercy for the sinner, are slowest in growth, and last in coming to maturity. Even women are often pitiless to their fallen sisters ; and the hatred which men have for unchastity in woman, is often made up of much self-love, with little or no admixture of pity for the hapless offender. In Jesus we have hatred of the sin, and pity for the sinner, both in their highest state of development, blending together in

perfect harmony, and forming a type of virtue never before exhibited.

"This story may serve as a specimen of Christ's redeeming power, in one of the most distressing and disheartening cases furnished by fallen humanity. And it shows the natural working of Christ's pure and boundless love; the spirit by which He was actuated in all He did. No other story has done so much for hapless women. It has gone to the heart of Christendom. It has given origin and even a name to institutions, which are found wherever the Christian Church is found, and the object of which is to redeem women that have fallen from virtue. It has wrought an amazing change for the better in the moral feelings of mankind with respect to women."

The conduct of Jesus towards woman was manly, noble, rational, generous, from first to last. At an early period of His ministry we find Him conversing freely on religion with a woman of Samaria, and making her the herald of His doctrine to her townsmen. On another occasion, a number of women brought their children to Him, that He might lay His hands on them and bless them. When the disciples saw it, they rebuked the women. But Jesus called the affectionate mothers unto him, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Many of the miracles which the Saviour

wrought, were wrought in behalf of women. One woman was cured of her affliction by touching the hem of His garment. And when the poor timid woman came trembling to acknowledge what she had done, and to declare how she had been healed, the Saviour, with all the tenderness imaginable, said to her, "Daughter, be of good comfort; Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

He cured Peter's wife's mother of a fever; and he healed the afflicted daughter of the woman of Canaan. In three instances the Redeemer raised persons from the dead, and in every instance the favor was directly or indirectly conferred on females. The child of Jairus was a female, and an only daughter. The young man of Nain was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. When the Lord saw her, as she was sorrowfully following her son to the grave, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, "Weep not." And He raised the young man from the dead, and delivered him alive to his mother. And Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead, was the brother of Martha and Mary, and appears to have been brought back to life, in a great measure, out of regard to their sisterly affection.

It was from a number of devoted women that He chose to receive the means of His support. It was to a dear good woman that Jesus gave His only promise on record of a world-wide and never-dying reputation. While He was at

Bethany, in the house of a neighbor, she brought a box of costly ointment, and poured it on His head as He sat at meat. When the disciples saw it they were grieved and said, Why is this waste? But Jesus answered, "Why trouble ye the woman? she hath wrought a good work on me; she hath done what she could. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever the Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there also shall this that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." And the prophecy has been fulfilled.

Among the crowds who attended upon His instructions, there were multitudes of women; and in every instance they appear to have been as kindly welcomed as the men. And He gave the privilege of near relationship to Him, to all who received and reduced to practice His instructions. On one occasion while He was teaching, a woman was so delighted with His discourse, that she lifted up her voice and said, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked." But He taught the woman, that a still greater blessedness was within the reach both of herself and of every other woman, saying, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." On another occasion, while He was talking to the people, some one told Him that His mother and brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him; and He answered and said, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?"

And He stretched forth His hand towards His disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren ! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Jesus promotes the welfare of woman, and the happiness of domestic life, in other ways. He forbids all those vices which tend to keep men from honorable marriage, or to embitter the marriage state. He teaches that it was the will of God from the beginning, that man's conjugal affections should be undivided, and consecrated in all their richness and devotedness to one wife. He forbids adultery, under the most awful sanctions, and warns us against the indulgence of an adulterous thought. He forbids divorce, except in cases of adultery, and assures us that the design of God in instituting marriage at the beginning was, that the union of the married pair should be as lasting as their lives. He forbids fornication and all uncleanness, and requires us to watch against the first inclinations to licentiousness, and to bring the flesh into such full subjection to the spirit, that the streams of corruption may be dried up from the fountain-head.

The spirit which the religion of Christ inspires is calculated to promote the happiness of woman in all the relations of life. The husband is not allowed to use his wife as a slave, but is required to treat her with peculiar tenderness, and even to

regard her very weakness as a title to especial honor. He is to love her, even as Christ loved the Church: he is to love her as he loves himself, and to nourish and cherish her as his own life. It encourages both husbands and wives to cultivate all lovely tempers, to promote each other's growth in all the graces of the Christian character, and to rejoice together in delightful expectations of the bliss of heaven. It not only preserves from injury their natural affections, but raises them into a heavenly flame, gives them a more than earthly fervor, constancy, and tenderness, and blends together their loving souls in sweetest and most heavenly sympathies. And such have been the effects of the religion of Christ, wherever its principles have been faithfully and fully received.

At this present time, there is not a country upon the face of the whole earth, where there are so many happy homes, or where the rights and privileges of women are so much respected, as in Christian England and America.

The homes of those who love and honor the Gospel, are dwellings of light and purity, of harmony and joy. The language of strife is unheard in them; the pangs of suspicion are unfelt; and the feelings and thoughts of selfishness are extinguished. Husbands and wives have but one interest and one aim, and their souls are united together in love and confidence. The greatest delight of their life is to alleviate each other's sorrows, to

dry up each other's tears, and to augment and multiply each other's joys. They live in each other's souls, and a strange, delightful sympathy mingles their very beings. If want or affliction comes upon them, their united strength enables them the better to bear it ; and if health and plenty are bestowed on them, their united joy and gratitude render their blessings doubly pleasant. The spirit of the Gospel that lives in them, the blessing of God that rests on them, and the prospects of eternal blessedness which lie before them, impart to their lives a continual sweetness, and give to their homes a portion of the glory and felicity of the world to come.

Nor are we indulging in dreams and visions when we thus speak : what we speak of our eyes have seen, and our hearts felt. We have lived in homes thus happy, and we have shared in their holy delights. Such homes may be found wherever men and women are found living according to the Gospel ; and if the religion of Jesus were universally received, and its principles thoroughly interwoven into the hearts and lives of men, all the homes in the wide world would be thus blessed.

And now look at woman under the various forms of wretchedness and shame in which she has been placed by impiety and sensuality, and then look at her clothed in the garments of purity, adorned with the fruits of the Spirit of God, em-

ployed in her labors of love, and rejoicing in the fulness of her heart in the hopes of a blessed immortality, and you will have some idea of the happy influence Jesus has exerted on the character and condition of woman. From the depths of pollution and shame,—from the wreck of her glory and joy,—from the sorrows and frenzies of a broken heart, and from all the miseries and fears of guilt, it raises her to loveliness and purity, to joy and dignity; to all that is dear and delightful on earth, and to all that is glorious in heaven.

And women repaid His kind regard for them with wonderful affection. They proved His most devoted and faithful friends. They kept by His side when His male disciples forsook Him and fled. They were first at His sepulchre, on the morning of His promised resurrection. They clung to His Church through all its persecutions. They lived for His poor. They died in His service. No braver martyrs aided His cause with their blood. No more zealous missionaries labored for the conversion of the nations. No more tender-hearted, self-denying, or devoted philanthropists served His suffering and needy followers; no fairer, purer, more unearthly saints did honor to His cause.

Among the people that followed Him to the cross, and stood lamenting and bewailing His death, great numbers, if not the principal part of them, were *daughters of Jerusalem*. They were

women that followed to the sepulchre the parties who buried the Saviour, and beheld how the body was laid. And they were women who, on the first day of the week, were first at the sepulchre, and who were made the first witnesses of the Saviour's resurrection from the dead: and it was to Mary, who remained at the sepulchre weeping, and to the other women who ran to tell the disciples of what they had seen at the sepulchre, that Jesus first showed Himself alive.

We find them employed in instructing the ignorant in the principles of religion, training the young in knowledge and piety, nursing and rearing orphan and outcast children, tending the sick, helping and comforting the prisoners, preaching the Gospel, building hospitals, forming themselves into societies for the exercise of charity, founding benevolent institutions, and distinguishing themselves by a forwardness to every good work. Some have distinguished themselves as authors, and many, in times of persecution, have stood forward as confessors of their Lord, and nobly earned the honors of martyrdom.

Some of the most devoted and brave and persevering philanthropists of the present day are Christian women. The principal part of the labor connected with our Bible societies, our Missionary societies, as well as our societies for clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, relieving the fatherless and widows, the aged and the afflicted, is per-

formed by Christian females. Some of the noblest and firmest friends of freedom, both in England and in the United States of America, and some of the ablest and most zealous *advocates* of liberty, were Christian females. And Christianity has honored our age with its female Howards, who have given themselves with unwearied diligence to promote the improvement of prison discipline, and the reformation of the unhappy prisoners. And in every direction we behold those lovely exemplifications of the religion of love and tenderness, moving about in society like angels of light and mercy, visiting the abodes of sin and sorrow, cheering sad hearts, drying up tears, supplying the wants of the needy, relieving the pains of affliction, imparting consolation to the dying, and directing the thoughts of the sons and daughters of suffering humanity to the glory and blessedness of heaven.

CHAPTER XII.

JESUS AND LITTLE CHILDREN.

ANOTHER beautiful trait and peculiar excellency in the character of Jesus, was the singular interest which He took in little children, and the remarkable concern He showed for their welfare. In pagan lands children were fearfully neglected, and

in many cases subjected to the greatest cruelty. It was no uncommon thing for children to be offered in sacrifice to idols. In ancient Canaan and contiguous countries the poor little creatures were made to pass through the fire to Moloch. In other lands benighted parents offered their first-born for their transgressions; the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls. And in others, not less cruel, children were cast out to be devoured by wild beasts, or to perish of starvation. This cruel practice prevailed among the ancient Greeks and Romans. Female children, especially, were thus abandoned. When spared, their lot was often one of great hardship. Both male and female children were regarded as property, and were bought and sold, taken for debts, or destroyed for the offences of their parents, and in some cases put to death by their own parents. Even in countries called Christian, children are often cruelly treated by infidel and unchristian parents. Rousseau exposed all his children, leaving them to perish, or to be reared as foundlings by his Christian neighbors. The destruction of children is a common thing with infidels. The natural affection of parents for their offspring is regarded by them as a prejudice. In Owen's infidel communities the arrangement was to separate them from their mothers, and place them in the hands of persons not troubled with natural affection. Infidels generally look on children as incumbrances, and on

large families as intolerable burdens. Their heaven is unlimited sensual indulgence, and children are looked upon as intruders and nuisances. Even those who are not infidels in name, often wrong and torture their children, when they become slaves to antichristian habits. Drunkards, gamblers, and licentious people often make for their children a hell on earth. Even rich and reputable people, when slaves to avarice, ambition, or fashion, often sacrifice their offspring to vanity and folly, and doom them to life-long wretchedness. Others, through their vices, die before their time, and leave their children in helpless orphanage. Others rear their children, as they rear cattle or poultry, with a view simply to the profit they may derive from them when they are able to work. Millions, living only for low objects themselves, bring up their children with low views, and train them for a low and earthly life. Many leave the poor creatures to themselves, or to the influences with which they are surrounded and the impulses which act within; and their characters, thus formed at random, are often earthly, sensual, and devilish, and their lives are a plague and a curse, instead of a comfort and a blessing, both to themselves and others. What multitudes live without honor, and die without hope, for want of wise and affectionate care in their education.

Yet children are creatures of infinite importance, and their proper training and culture should

take rank among the most solemn responsibilities and the most important duties of life.

Children are the material out of which all the men and women in the world are made. Their welfare, therefore, is the welfare of the whole human race. If they can be properly taught and trained, there is a prospect of a happy world. If they are neglected, or trained amiss, there is nothing to be looked for but ignorance and sin, wretchedness and ruin, the wide world over.

And what interesting creatures little children really are! Even as objects of natural curiosity, or as specimens of God's wondrous workmanship, you cannot study them too closely. How wonderfully they are formed. How beautiful they are. I never tire of looking at their fingers, their cheeks, their chins, their lips, their eyes; and I never cease to look with wonder. They are the creatures of a most wonderful and glorious Creator.

And then when they begin to look, and love, and listen, and smile, how enchanting they become. And how their charms increase as they begin to think, and speak, and ask questions, and learn. What a wonderful unfolding of mysterious powers, and of strange sensibilities and affections! What claims the darlings have upon our love and care. What a solemn responsibility rests on those who have been the instruments of bringing them into being, and on all, in fact, under whose care and influence they may fall.

It is a strange, an awful, yet a glorious nature they bring with them into the world. How desirable that it should have the best opportunities for a full and happy unfolding! It is a strange world too into which they are born;—a world of strange trials, of strange sorrows, and of strange joys:—a world of infinite, unspeakable marvels,—a glorious product of infinite perfections; the contrivance, the work, of unbounded goodness, of infinite wisdom, and of almighty power;—a world in which there is a world of wonderful and glorious things to be learned, and a world of glorious things to be done, and a world of glorious blessings to be enjoyed. And yet it is an awful world: a world in which man may err, and sin, and suffer in a thousand ways, and to an incalculable extent;—a world in which error and sin and wretchedness already exist;—a world in which there are numberless temptations to numberless forms of wickedness and folly, and fearful allurements to wretchedness and ruin;—a world abounding with wrecks of humanity, and mournful perversions of powers and blessings. It is a world in which the children of men cannot become wise and great and good without effort, without conflict, without sacrifice and self-denial. Yet it is nevertheless a world in which things are so arranged, that effort, conflict, self-denial in all good causes, lead to success, to victory over every evil, to growing strength for glorious under-

takings ; to freedom from passion, and lust, and sin, to peace, and joy, and heavenly blessedness. A strange world, with ways that lead to life, and ways that lead to death ; with ways that lead to heaven, and ways that lead to hell ; with ladders down which men step to degradation, to misery, to perdition ; and up which men rise to glory, honor and immortality. Wonderful natures these children bring into a wondrous world.

And one or other of the extremes of light or darkness, of wisdom or folly, of purity or pollution, of sin or holiness, of bliss or wo, they must experience. Two great mysterious worlds contend for every child ; the world of blessed and holy beings, and the world of dark infernal powers ; and one must conquer, and the child be saved or lost accordingly.

And we are the reserved forces which must decide the conflict. We have the balance of power, that turns the scale of destiny ; and on our decision and efforts depends the great result. How needful that we should have a wise and good example, to make plain to us the path of duty. How needful we should have a sight of love for childhood that may kindle love in us,—that some all-powerful attraction should present itself, and draw us in the right direction, and lure us to the proper course of labors for their salvation.

What a world of happiness these dear children may enjoy, if they are rightly trained, and pro-

perly directed. And what a world of pain and sorrow they may have to endure, if they are neglected, or trained and guided amiss.

And what a world of good or evil they may do to others ! To what a vast extent they may contribute to the virtue and happiness of the world, if they become wise and good ; and to what a fearful extent they may add to its sin and wretchedness, if they become the victims of error, and the slaves of vice. How much good one sinner may destroy ! How much evil he may create ! What a fearful influence the lecturer and the preacher, the author and the teacher, the poet and the orator, the philosopher and the ruler, the scholar and the capitalist may exert on the destinies of a nation, on the lot of our race. What blessings they may confer if they are good ; what curses they may entail if they are evil.

And who can tell what powers for good or evil may lie concealed in these little ones. Bacon and Newton, Locke and Boyle, Wyckliffe and Luther, Baxter and Penn, Wesley and Whitefield, and John Howard, and Elizabeth Fry, nay, even Paul and John, and a greater than they all, were once such babes as these. And they had, when babes, the germs of all the grace, and power, and glory which they afterwards displayed ; though no one could penetrate their breasts, and discern those germs. And others, perhaps, had similar germs, which were never unfolded, for want of needful culture.

And the germs reposing in the hearts of the little ones around us may never be unfolded, if we leave the dear creatures to themselves; and they *may* be unfolded, and prove an infinite blessing to the world, if we pay them due attention. These darling creatures are committed to our care. Their future is in our hands, and on our wisdom and fidelity depends, to an unknown extent, their character and history, their usefulness or hurtfulness, their bliss or their wo, their glory or their shame forever. How needful that we should do our best for their moral and spiritual improvement.

We *may* save them perhaps, even if we suffer them to grow up in ignorance and sin;—but how much better if we can save them from the beginning,—secure both the first-fruits and the harvest for God and goodness, instead of the gleanings merely, or the margins and the corners of the fields. Prevention is better than cure,—better for the parties themselves,—better for those who may come under their influence,—better for their families,—better for the Church, and better for the world.

It is the sight of Jesus, taking the little children in His arms, laying His hands on them and blessing them, that fills me with these solemn considerations, and impresses on me an unutterable sense of responsibility for the little ones with which we are everywhere surrounded. Jesus looks on them as a priceless treasure, and claims them as His

own. "It is not the will of your heavenly Father," says He, "that one of these little ones should perish. Nor is it my will! 'I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.' 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" And He says to His disciples, "Feed my lambs." "Guard them if ye love me, from danger. Teach them; bless them. Be careful that you put no stumbling-block in their way." He seems to look at me and tell me all my duty, and to say, "Will you not join Me in this blessed work?" His looks, His words, His deeds all speak to me and say, Love those little ones, look to them, care for them, teach them, train them, lay your hands on them, take them in your arms, bless them. I have given you an example, that you should tread in my steps. Do as I have done, and consecrate your time, your powers, your property; consecrate the pulpit, the platform, the press, to the salvation of the rising race.

How wise, how kind the Saviour was in all this! What a power of affection He called forth in the human heart towards the little ones by this manifestation of His love! What schools, what books, what colleges, what prayers, what domestic churches, have grown out of this!

In short, the manner in which Jesus took the children in His arms and blessed them, and the promptness with which He rebuked His disciples when they sought to keep back the little ones and

their mothers from His presence, produced an effect in their favor on the great heart of humanity, that continues to the present day, and that will remain, and produce the happiest results, as long as time shall last.

And Jesus knew, that to show kindness to the children, was to win the hearts of their mothers. A shepherd once saw a terrible storm coming, and set himself to drive his flock into the fold, and get them under shelter, but they refused to go in. He then entered the fold himself and called to the sheep to follow ; but still they refused to enter. The shepherd was distracted. The storm was coming nearer every moment, threatening his wayward flock with destruction, and not one would enter the fold. At length he said to himself, ' Whatever comes of those obstinate sheep, I will save a few of the lambs ; ' so he caught up a number of them in his arms, and carried them under shelter. The poor bleating lambs called to their mothers, and their mothers bleating rushed into the fold ; and soon the lambs and their mothers were all secure together. The others remained awhile outside, but not feeling comfortable alone, they too pressed into the fold at length, and the whole flock was safe.

And so it is with Jesus, the great good shepherd of humanity. He seeks to get us all secured before the deadly storm comes down upon us ; but we, in our madness, refuse to enter the fold. We will

neither be driven nor led. At length He takes a number of our lambs in His arms, and carries them in His bosom, and the mothers follow with the utmost haste; and mothers and lambs are soon together again. The tough-hearted husbands and fathers stand out awhile, but they are not at ease alone; and so they follow sooner or later, and all are secure together. Ye under shepherds of Jesus, here is your lesson. Like all the lessons of Jesus, it is the perfection of wisdom and love. Get hold of the lambs. Take them in your arms; carry them in your bosom; and bear them into the fold. The poor bleating mothers will soon be after you, and the fathers will not stay long behind; and Jesus shall rejoice that not one of His flock has perished.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REGARD OF JESUS FOR MEN'S SPIRITUAL INTERESTS.

ANOTHER remarkable trait in Christ's character was, His supreme regard for the interests of men's souls. He came into the world to save sinners, and to this He gave Himself without reserve. To make men wise and good,—to bring them, heart and life, into obedience to God's will, and to lead

them ever onward in truth and righteousness, was the one great object of His life. And in this, as in all His other traits, He is worthy of our most careful imitation.

Sin is the one great evil of the world, and the fountain of every other evil; and deliverance from sin, and restoration to righteousness, is the one thing needful to the world's happiness. Sin is hell; and holiness is heaven.

Salvation from sin, and restoration to righteousness, is a great happiness in itself. It is a great happiness to individuals. To be freed from evil passions and evil habits, and to have the heart filled with love to God and love to man; to be delivered from low cares, and withdrawn from low pursuits, and employed in the highest and holiest occupations, is a blessing of unspeakable value.

And it draws after it a number of other inestimable blessings. It brings us peace of mind. It secures us the approbation of God, and an assurance of His love and care. It delivers us from tormenting fears. It enables us to trust in God's providence, and to rejoice in the assurance that all things work together for our good. It opens to us the gates of heaven, and gives us a prospect and a foretaste of its eternal joys. It brings a multitude of pleasures which we cannot always understand, and which we cannot always trace to their particular sources, but which we know and feel are the result of our change of heart, and of our altered

relations to God and His universe. It fills our souls with a world of delightful thoughts, and cheering views of God's character and works. We find unspeakable happiness in our intercourse with God, and in our fellowship with Jesus and His people. Our hymns and prayers, and our religious converse yield us rich delights.

This blessed change of heart and life, and of our relations to God and His works, sweetens all the ordinary pleasures of life. It sweetens learning and science. It sweetens love and marriage. It exalts and purifies our natural affections, and adds to the blessedness of all human relationships. It gives, in Christian friendship and domestic bliss, a foretaste of the happiness of heaven. It promotes all our temporal interests. Godliness is profitable unto all things, bringing with it the blessings of the life that now is, as well as the promise of the life which is to come. Religion is favorable to health, to wealth, to honor, to power, to greatness; and it disposes its subjects to use their temporal blessings in promoting both the present and the eternal interests of mankind.

Religion is favorable to the fullest development and the greatest power of the human mind; and it adds to a man's powers of usefulness in every way.

Religion is favorable to all the great interests of society. It is favorable to freedom, to commerce, to science, to virtue, to learning, to art, to peace and security, and to all that can add to the great-

ness, the glory, and the happiness of nations. It is, in short, the one great requisite to the happiness of the world. Let sin and error prevail, and rule unchecked, and earth would become a hell of unimaginable horrors. Let truth and righteousness prevail, and rule unchecked, and earth will become a heaven, and its inhabitants will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The salvation of sinners, the illumination and sanctification of men's souls, and the reformation of their lives, means the destruction of all evil, the perfection of all good, and the greatest possible fulness of human and divine felicity. It was therefore the perfection of wisdom in Jesus, as well as of goodness, to make this the one great end and business of His life.

In this, as well as in a multitude of other cases, Jesus shows an infinite superiority, even as a philosopher and reformer, to the great geniuses of antiquity, as well as to the skeptical philosophers, and worldly politicians of the present day. They do great things in the way of overturning governments, and changing laws, and making constitutions, and thus excite the expectations of their eager and thirsty followers; but all their reforms are revolutions, which, after causing a world of confusion and misery, leave the condition of the working-classes little if any better, and in many cases considerably worse, than it was before. Jesus never troubles Himself about forms of government, political constitutions, or legal enactments, but

employs Himself in enlightening people's minds, and in purifying their hearts, and in reforming their lives, and gradually the beneficial influence of His labors pervades society, silently transforming governments, improving institutions and laws, and making all things new. Better habits bring better times. Better men make all things better. Personal reform brings national reform, and national reform brings national prosperity. Religion goes first, and happiness follows; the happiness of the individual and the family first, and then the happiness of the nation and of the world. "Thou art, O Jesus, the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God." "Thou doest all things well."

How strangely the appearances of things differ from the realities; and how often, and how wondrously, that which seems wisdom in the eyes of infidel and worldly men, is proved to be folly; while that which seems foolishness in their eyes, is proved to be the perfection of wisdom. What seemed in Jesus and His followers to be labors for the moral and spiritual improvement of individuals only,—despised and neglected individuals with no apparent influence,—proved to be the means of the greatest social regeneration that ever took place on earth: while plans and schemes for the world's improvement formed by statesmen and philosophers of the world, fall to the ground, effecting little or nothing but the ruin of their proud, ungodly authors, and the confusion of their

misguided followers. Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; but blessed is the man that trusteth in God, and falls in with the plans and workings of His providence.

CHAPTER XIV.

JESUS DOING GOOD TO MEN'S BODIES.

WHILE Jesus employed Himself chiefly in laboring for the salvation of men's souls, He appears to have embraced every opportunity that presented itself of doing good to men's bodies. As we have seen, He healed the sick, He fed the hungry, and raised the dead. Nearly all His miracles were miracles of mercy to men's bodies. When He sent out His disciples to preach, He commanded them to work similar miracles of beneficence wherever they went.

And those of His disciples whom He did not send forth to preach and work miracles, He urged to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to relieve the stranger, to visit the sick and the prisoner. He urged all His followers to show kindness to the poor.

He seems Himself to have made the relief of the poor a part of His regular work, and to have

employed the funds supplied to Him by His friends for this work. When Jesus, on a certain occasion, said to Judas, 'What thou doest, do quickly,' some of the disciples supposed Him to be telling him to '*give something to the poor.*'

This tender regard of Jesus for the temporal welfare of men is another point in which He is worthy of our imitation. The thing was not only good in itself, but was calculated to have the happiest influence on His labors for men's spiritual welfare. It arrested people's attention, and commanded their respect. It won their love. It increased His fame and power. It disposed people to listen to His words. He opened, in this way, a readier passage to their hearts, and found admission there for His doctrine. People that had no conception of the value of spiritual blessings, could appreciate the kindness that gave them and their dear ones health, and food, and life, and mental soundness. And their love and gratitude for temporal blessings attached them, first, to His person, and then to His cause.

And they that did not need His miracles of beneficence themselves, could love and venerate the great good heart that wrought them so freely in behalf of their neighbors. And by the sympathy which He showed for the suffering, He won the hearts of men generally to His side.

There are three ways to the heart of man. The first is through the ear, by words. But this is rather

a dark passage, and a crooked one; and messengers sent along it often miss their way, or get no farther than the head; and in many cases, while they go in at one ear, they slip out at the other. The second way is through the eye, by noble deeds. This is a shorter, a directer and a surer way than the other. People will be moved by kind, good deeds, even when they themselves receive no immediate benefit from them; just as they are moved by a story of generous deeds which were done before they were born. What enters at this gate, seldom fails to reach its destination. The third way to the heart is through the mouth. This is the shortest and the straightest cut of all. Give bread to the famishing, and His heart, as a rule, is yours at once and forever.

Jesus sought access to men's hearts through all these openings, and He found it. Never did words make their way to the hearts of men so readily, so surely, or find such a lasting lodgment there, as the gracious words which fell from His lips. And never did a pure and exalted life charm men's eyes so strangely, or impress its image so deeply and indelibly on men's souls, as His. But when famishing thousands, with their wives and little ones, did eat of the loaves and were filled, they broke forth in exclamations, saying, 'We never saw it on this fashion;' 'He hath done all things well.'

And the effect was as great and as happy when

people were relieved and comforted in other ways by the miracles of Jesus. When fathers who had been disabled by palsy,—when mothers who had suffered for years from pain and weakness,—when little children and youth were cured of fevers or frenzies,—when the blind were made to see, and the dumb to speak, and the deaf to hear; and above all, when sons or daughters were raised from the dead, and restored to their childless and widowed mothers, the joyous excitement and the shouts of praise were unbounded. A powerful feeling in favor of the Great Benefactor spread through the whole country, and every one was eager to hear His doctrine.

This method of winning men's hearts to goodness by sensible benefits, is the one that God adopted with regard to the Jews. He sought to convince them of His goodness, and lure them to obey His law, in the first place, by the bestowment of temporal blessings. In nature also, He lets us taste sensible good, before we are capable of enjoying spiritual blessings. In Paradise He gave to our first parents outward, sensible blessings first. He planted them a garden, stored it with fruit, adorned it with flowers, and gave them safety, ease, and health, to attach their hearts to Him, and render obedience a pleasure. He did not subject them to pain and trouble till afterwards, and then only as a punishment for sin. The painful discipline which came last, was a greater

blessing than the childish indulgence previously granted; but our progenitors were incapable of understanding this at the first.

Our reproofs of our children may be stronger proofs of our regard for their welfare, than our presents of cakes and confectionery; but our children cannot see this at the outset. And if we would attach their childish hearts to us, we must give them, to some extent, a kind of blessings which they can appreciate.

And mankind at large are children, and have to be treated in a similar way. If we would convince them of our love, we must give them, and do for them, such things as they are accustomed to regard as unquestionable proofs of love. The things we give them or do for them may, in truth, be but a lower kind of blessings; but the question is not, *What are they*; but, in what light are they regarded? If we would talk to people in words, we must use such words as they can understand; and if we would talk to them in deeds, we must talk to them in such deeds as they can appreciate.

And there are numbers who can appreciate no kind of favors, but favors of a lower order. They know what the pleasures of taste are, but they have no idea of the richer and higher pleasures of learning and science, of virtue and religion. They see the good things of the present life, but they see nothing as yet of the good things of the life to come, nor have they any distinct

idea of them. Give them a loaf, when they are hungry, and they thank you with all their hearts; but offer them a book, or give them a lesson, and they only stare. Yet the book or the lesson may be far more valuable than the loaf.

Thoughtless and unconverted people generally have no idea of the value of spiritual blessings. Some do not even believe in the existence of such blessings. The only way therefore in which you can prove your love for such people, or make them feel that you have laid them under any obligation, is to give them some good of a sensible kind. When you have convinced them that you love them by a sort of argument that they can understand; you may find them disposed to accept from you blessings of a higher kind.

The course pursued by Jesus in this matter, was not only a proof of unparalleled goodness, but of amazing wisdom. It was the perfection of philosophy as well as of charity. It showed a wonderful knowledge of human nature, as well as a remarkable readiness to take advantage, in the prosecution of His great and glorious work, of all the good and powerful springs of human conduct.

And the course which Jesus Himself took with regard to men's temporal wants, He intended His Church to take to the end of time. And as a rule the Church has carried out His intentions with remarkable zeal and fidelity. In the Church first founded at Jerusalem, distribution was made to the

poor, as every one had need. Those who had wealth held it as stewards of Christ and His Church, and no one was allowed to lack the necessities of life. And afterwards, when the Churches were multiplied, they made collections for each other, supplying each other's needs as circumstances required. It was the law of Christ, that they should bear one another's burdens; and faithfully did they observe it. It was laid down as a principle that the surplus of one Church should supply the lack of another, and that the Churches helped and comforted to-day, should, when favored with prosperity, help and comfort their needy sister Churches in return. And this custom prevailed to such an extent, that even the heathen would say, 'See how these Christians love one another.'

Lucian ridicules the Christians for what he regarded as their excessive liberality, while the emperor Julian calls on the Pagans to imitate the Christians, with a view to check the spread of Christianity, and bring about a revival of Paganism. He says to the Pagan priests, how can we expect to prosper, while the Christians not only support their own poor, but relieve ours; while we leave our poor to perish?

Many rich Christians spent the whole of their property in redeeming captives, releasing prisoners, building hospitals and relieving distress. Others spent their money in multiplying copies of the

Scriptures and spreading the Gospel in new regions.

The Christians risked their lives in visiting the sick in times of plagues, in burying the dead, and in attending to surviving orphans and widows. When Pagans deserted the plague-stricken town or city, the Christians remained, attending both to their own sick and the sick of the heathen.

Even when under heathen persecution, the Christians continued their liberality to their enemies, and, in some cases, melted the hearts of their persecutors by their persistent charity.

The first hospital for the sick was built by Fabriola, a Christian lady, who spent a large fortune in the undertaking, and attended and nursed the sick and the dying in person.

Multitudes of hospitals, as well as other charitable institutions, were afterwards built and endowed by Christians; and the good work has gone on to the present time.

Some Christian men gave the whole of their property to churches, for the use of the poor; while others distributed their wealth with their own hands.

The work of charity, both to the bodies and souls of men, went on through what are called the dark ages. Though Christianity got encumbered with many superstitions, the life of love was never extinguished, nor did works of charity to the bodies and souls of men ever fail.

But a history of Christian beneficence would require a hundred volumes. The old world is full of proofs of the generosity of Christian men and women. Charitable institutions present themselves everywhere, and benevolent societies are counted by hundreds. The names of a thousand great men and women might be given, who consecrated both their property and their lives to the work of Christian beneficence. And the new world is emulating the old, and, in some cases, is leaving it behind.

Perhaps no one in these later ages has more faithfully followed the example of Jesus, both in this and many other particulars, than John Wesley. His charity, both to the bodies and souls of men, was unbounded. There was no end to his labors, but his life; and there were no limits to his liberality, but the limits of his resources.

When his income was thirty pounds a year, he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two to the poor. When his income rose to sixty, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away thirty-two. When his income rose to ninety, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away sixty-two. For some years his only food was bread; and for more than two years he lived on potatoes alone. He would spend nothing on plate, or pictures, or on any articles of luxury. He felt that all he had was God's; and to the cause of God, and to the relief of the poor he gave his all. And thus he went through life, restraining his desires, and extending his bounty

every year to the last. He died worth ten pounds, which he had set aside for the expenses of his funeral.

By the help of generous friends, he was enabled both to extend and vary his benevolent operations. He founded a dispensary, and practised as a physician; carrying medicines up and down with him in his pockets and saddle-bags, while he carried the Gospel in his head and heart; thus healing men's bodies, while he saved their souls.

He founded homes for orphans and widows. He established schools. He printed cheap tracts and books. He cured the insane.

When work was scarce, he bought yarn, and cloth, and thread, and set people to work in the vestries of his churches, knitting stockings, and making clothes.

He bought cotton, and set the people to work to spin it, and turned his places of worship into cotton mills.

He collected wagon loads of partly worn or cast-off clothing, and distributed it among such as were unable to buy new.

He had collections, both in the churches and in the classes, for the relief of poor members of society. And it was by these, and similar acts of generosity, that he won men's hearts to Christ.

And Whitefield pursued a somewhat similar course, with like results.

Neither Whitefield nor Wesley could preach like

Saurin, or Massillon, or Bourdaloue, or Bossuet; but they lived better. Wesley's sermons are not miracles of eloquence; Whitefield's, as reported, are really poor; yet people crowded in thousands and tens of thousands to hear them. And everywhere numbers were converted. It was the good hearts and the generous deeds of those two great men which their congregations heard talking when they went to hear them, and not their tongues alone. They flocked to their ministry full of admiration, love and gratitude, and they were moved and melted before they heard the first lesson read, or the text announced. They saw sweet Gospel sermons in the preachers' faces, before they heard a word from their lips. They took sweet sermons along with them in their hearts and memories. They took salvation with them to those meetings. They found it there, because they took it with them.

And it is always thus. It is the preacher's heart that touches other hearts. Spurgeon is a man of power both physically and intellectually, but his greatest power is the goodness of his heart, and the beneficence of his life.

George Muller is no great preacher. Yet his sermons have wonderful power, because his trust in God, and his wonderful orphan houses, the largest in the world, go into the pulpit with him, and give a force to his words like the mighty power of God.

It may be said that preachers at the present day have not the means necessary to win men's hearts by beneficence to their bodies; and I shall not attempt to prove the contrary. I content myself with stating facts and principles. But who knows how much a church would help a pastor, if they saw him anxious to relieve distress? And who can tell how much a pastor might increase the liberality of his church and congregation, if he were to preach to them faithfully the Gospel law in all its fulness, and press on them the necessity of looking more intently on the example of their glorious model.

But there *are* no poor requiring relief near *our* churches, say some. Then so much the worse for your churches. But are not many professors of Christianity eager to get out of the way of the poor, and live in a selfish isolated paradise of their own?

But these are points for each one to settle for himself. My special business at present is to set forth our great model.

But one thing is certain: the self-denial, the condescension, the voluntary poverty, the voluntary suffering, the voluntary death of Jesus, are the one great sermon that has sounded through the universe—that has thrilled the hearts of men for eighteen centuries—that has transformed society—that has changed the face of the earth, and that is destined to ring on, and work with increasing power, till it

has regenerated and saved the world. His words are powerful; but His life and death, His cross and passion, are almighty, and will not cease to operate till they have made all things new.

CHAPTER XV.

JESUS' EFFORTS TO SAVE ALL.

Open Air Preaching.

JESUS did not confine His labors to the temple and the synagogues; He preached mostly in the open air. Some of His discourses He delivered on mountains, some on the sea: some He preached in the streets and highways, and some in markets and private houses. Nor did He always wait for people to come to Him; vast as the multitudes were that flocked to hear Him, He knew there were some that stayed away, and He went in search of them. He not only sent His servants, but went Himself out into the highways and hedges, to invite people to God.

And when at length He sent forth His apostles, His command was, "Go ye out into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." His purpose was to have His Gospel brought to bear

on every soul of man, and to exert its sanctifying influence on all the human race.

Christ's Love Universal.

And here it may be proper to remark, that the love of Jesus is literally unbounded. It takes in every soul of men. He not only loves men generally but individually. He looks to the interests of every human being. He seeks to make every one, of every rank and of every nation, wise and good and happy. He is not only without prejudice and partiality, disposed to impart instruction and confer privileges and blessings on men of all nations and complexions; but He is desirous, unspeakably desirous, of the moral and spiritual renovation, and of the eternal salvation of every child of man. He would not have one lost. He would draw *all* men unto Him. He would have His people so to let the light of truth and virtue shine around them, that "*all in the house* may see the light." He would have the last stray sheep on earth sought after, and brought to the pasture and the fold. He would have the last human being on earth, whether black or white, male or female, brought home to holiness, to happiness and to heaven.

When the Wesley parsonage at Epworth was on fire, and it was supposed that the family and servants had all made their escape, it was found that

one of the little children was missing. It had been left in the burning house. A cry arose. Just then the little creature looked out of the window of a room already on fire, and every one rushed to the rescue—the child was snatched from the burning house. It was little John. And now there went up to heaven from the hearts of the parents, the glad voice of thanksgiving, while all around shed tears of joy for the salvation of the child. The joy, the thanksgiving, would have been mixed with a fearful sadness, if that last dear little one had perished in the flames. The salvation of the last one made the joy of father and mother, of brothers and sisters, of friends and neighbors, and, since then, the joy of the world complete. The mother wants the last of her children to be saved. And Jesus would have the last of the sons of men brought home. He has in His heart the love of father and mother, of sister and brother, of neighbor and friend, filling it to the brim and running over; and He would have every single soul of all the human family saved. Beautiful! glorious! And why *should* it not be so? Every child alike is dear to its father and mother, and so is every child of God to its Father in heaven.

And who knows the amount of good to others that would be lost by the loss of that one soul? What a loss it would have been to the world if the child, John Wesley, had perished in the flames of the parsonage! And who can tell the amount of

good secured to the world through his rescue? And the child, or youth, or man you are tempted to neglect, may have as much of good within him for his race, as Wesley had; and his loss may be as great a loss to the world as his would have been.

And you cannot secure the rest of our race if you neglect a part. Leave one man a sinner, and you shall never know the amount of good he may destroy. Leave one plague-infected person in a city, and he may infect the whole population. Cure him,—cure the last,—and all is safe. Leave one tongue untamed, and it may set on fire the whole course of nature. Allow the house of your neighbor to burn, and the fire will destroy your own. Leave one patch of ground uncultivated near your dwelling, and it will fill your whole garden with weeds. Do what you will to keep your garden clear, one gust of wind will waft the seeds from the neglected patch, and your work will have to be begun again. Leave a swamp outside your farm undrained, and the bad air it will generate will poison your whole family. Leave one drunkard, one gambler, one profligate in your neighborhood unconverted, and you will never know where the evil will end. If you do not draw the men up to your level, they will draw you down to theirs. Leave a neighboring nation poor, and she will send her paupers and her beggars through all your land. Leave her degraded, and she will degrade you. It is our interest as well as our duty

to save *all*,—to leave not one untaught or unblest. Jesus knew this, and therefore pleaded, labored, suffered, bled, for the salvation of all. The interests of our race are one. Society is like the human body; if one member suffers, all the members must suffer. We cannot rise or fall, rejoice or suffer, be saved or lost alone; and the wisdom as well as the duty of each is to seek the salvation of all.

In Season and out of Season.

On one occasion, if not more, Jesus preached to a congregation of one, and made no complaints about the smallness of His audience. And He was hungry, and thirsty, and weary at the time. And His congregation was a woman,—a woman of a hated people,—a Samaritan. And what was worse, she was a woman of somewhat indifferent character. But she was willing to hear, and to answer too; so Jesus preached to her as freely as if He had been addressing a hundred or a thousand saints.

And His word was with power. It startled the woman; it waked up her slumbering conscience, with a host of awful memories, and she ran with all her might to call her neighbors, saying, "Come see a man that told me all that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Her neighbors were as ready to accept the call, as she was eager to give it. And now He had quite a crowd around Him, and many believed on Him, and there was a great ingathering of souls that day.

The Samaritans were so taken with their new preacher, that they besought Him to tarry with them : and He abode there two days. What were the subjects on which He spoke to them, I do not know ; but two days are not three years, and as He was anxious to get through His work as quickly as possible, and do it thoroughly too, we may be assured that He spent no time in talking about trifles, or on things of little moment. He would come at once, no doubt, to matters of first importance, and keep to them. And it is possible, that in those two days He gave the Samaritans as much sound truth and saving information, as some preachers in this enlightened and wonderful nineteenth century, would give to their congregations in two or three years. In many cases, His labors had a blessed effect, for we are told that many believed on Him ; and said to the woman that first told them of the wonderful stranger, "Now we believe, not because of thy sayings ; for we have heard Him ourselves ; and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

The story of Christ's encounter with this woman of Samaria, and of His conversation with her, and of His two days sojourn with the Samaritan villagers, sets the zeal of Christ for the salvation of souls, and the wonderful self-forgetfulness of His devotion to His glorious work, in a most striking and touching light.

As we have said, when Jesus commenced His con-

versation with the Samaritan woman He was tired, and hungry, and thirsty ; and if His soul had not been strangely superior to His body, and if the ruling passion of His soul had not been at something like the boiling point, he would certainly have laid Himself down on His rocky couch, and, exposed as He was to the rays of the sun, fallen fast asleep. But no sooner does He see an opportunity of doing good, though only to one of a hostile people, and an outcast class, than He forgets His hunger, His thirst, and His weariness, and sets to work to rouse this woman's soul, and open a way into her heart for the renovating truths of His Gospel, and never gives up His efforts till He has accomplished His blessed object.

Meanwhile His disciples, who had left Him to rest, and gone to a neighboring village in search of food, returned, with the needed supplies. They were astonished to find Him talking with the obnoxious Samaritan woman ; but were afraid or reluctant to interrupt Him, or to ask Him any questions. At length, when the woman left, and went to the city, they 'prayed Him, saying, Master, eat. But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. The disciples said to one another, Hath any man brought Him ought to eat ? Jesus answered, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.' And then, as if His sermon to the woman had not been enough, He began, instead of eating, to preach to His dis-

ciples ; and a most beautiful and interesting discourse He gave them, full of the grandest and most cheering truths, and revealing the sweetest, the meekest, the most patient, and the most self-sacrificing spirit. And whether or not the fervor of His loving zeal ever cooled down sufficiently to allow Him to feel the cravings of His body for food, or rest, or drink, and partake of the bread which His disciples had been so thoughtful as to provide for Him, I cannot say ; but it is no where hinted that He either ate or drank or slept so long as He continued the services at the well. 'Thou Friend and Saviour of the world, how can we testify our admiration at the greatness of Thy love, or show our gratitude for the countless and inestimable blessings which we owe to Thy self-forgetful and self-sacrificing labors and sufferings for our race? Help us, adorable Saviour, to cast in our lot with Thee, without reserve, and to employ our powers, and spend our property and our lives to further that blessed and glorious cause which is so dear to Thy heart.'

Jesus, I fain would find

Thy zeal for God in me :

Thy yearning pity for mankind,

Thy burning charity.

In me Thy Spirit dwell ;

In me Thy bowels move ;

So shall the fervor of my zeal

Be the pure flame of Love.

CHAPTER XVI.

JESUS—OTHER TRAITS AND PECULIARITIES.

Theories and Speculations.

CHRIST cared nothing about theories, or matters of mere speculation. What He was intent on were great practical truths, and solid matters of fact and duty. It is astonishing how little of all that is said in Creeds and Confessions, in Catechisms and systems of divinity, is to be found in His discourses. I have three books, written by the best and most practical theologian I know, which propound and discuss more than a thousand theological questions, not one of which is discussed in the discourses of Christ. I refer to Baxter's *Methodus Theologicæ*, his *Catholic Theology*, and his *Christian Directory*. Either many theologians are very foolish, or Jesus was not very wise. But I shall stick to my model.

Opinions.

Jesus seldom or never troubled people about their opinions. His great object was to secure their love and confidence. He seemed to go on the supposition, that if people were right in their disposition, they would be sure in time, to become tolerably right in their creed. He was wonder-

fully patient with His disciples. They were slow to learn, but He gave them time. It is doubtful whether they ever understood Him thoroughly ; yet He employed them in His service, comforted them in their troubles, and took them at last to His kingdom. He liked warm hearts better than clear heads. Yet He liked clear heads better than cloudy ones.

Jesus and Free-Thought.

Christ sought to induce His hearers to think. He would tell them enough to enable them to understand a subject, if they would exercise their own faculties, but not enough to save them the trouble of thinking. His object was to develop men's spiritual powers, that they might be able to judge for themselves what was true and good. He had no idea that one man was as strong in mind, or as able in judgment, as another : but He wished all to be as strong and able as possible. He knew that there would always be a hundred sheep for one shepherd ; but He wished the sheep to be able to distinguish between a good shepherd and a bad one ; between a pool of pure water and a puddle ; and between a pasture of sweet and wholesome grasses, and a thorny thicket, or a desert of sand.

Jesus and Controversy.

Jesus showed a great repugnance to controversy. He would, on particular occasions, hold a

short debate to expose the hypocrisy and wickedness of His enemies, for the benefit of His disciples and lookers-on; but as a rule He contented Himself with teaching the truth, leaving it to work its way; thus forcing people, if they would debate, to debate with their own consciences.

With captious cavillers He would not talk at all. Nor would He answer questions asked by persons who sought only for the gratification of their vain curiosity. He encouraged a sober, grave inquiry after truth and duty, but nothing further. Hence when one asked, "Are there few that be saved?" His answer was, in effect, "What is that to thee? Thou wilt not be saved unless thou make the service of God the one great business of thy life. Do thy best, and do it now, or thou wilt be undone."

When Pilate asked Him, "What is truth?" He answered him never a word. He had said all that was necessary on the subject before, and He would not be drawn into useless controversy.

So also when Peter questioned Him as to the future fate of John, the only answer he received was, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

On one occasion, when His enemies asked Him a captious question about His authority, He answered by asking them a question about the mission of John; and they, finding they could not answer it without convicting themselves of gross wickedness or inconsistency, went away confounded.

There are occasions when silence is immensely more powerful for good, than the finest words, or the strongest arguments.

Ecclesiastical Freedom.

Jesus bound Himself to no human creed. He placed Himself in the power of no sect, no priesthood. He chose to be free. His doctrine was controlled by nothing outside Himself. He taught just what He saw and felt to be true and good. Had He belonged to a sect, teaching heretical doctrines or inculcating a false morality, He would either have worked Himself out of it, or changed the sect into His own likeness. He was a Jew, but He worked Himself out of Judaism into fellowship with humanity, and into perfect harmony with God. He outgrew the Jewish religion and the Jewish law, but never treated them with contempt. Without either breaking the law Himself, or teaching His disciples to break it, He quietly took out of it all that was good, and embodied it in His own doctrine, giving it new life, and a new form. He was the freest of all preachers; yet the most modest and moderate of all reformers. Not only righteousness and peace, mercy and truth, but radicalism and conservatism met in Him, and were blended in one harmonious whole.

And now, if He were a minister in some modern

Church, He would quarrel with neither preachers nor people, creed nor discipline; but go right on with His work, meekly and faithfully preaching the truth, and peaceably living God's law; drawing all by the force of His all-powerful love to higher attainments in knowledge and goodness, and to greater measures of usefulness and happiness. If He were expelled, He would take His new position without a murmur, and go on with His work as if nothing had happened; never doubting but all would come right in the end.

CHAPTER XVII.

TOLERATION.

JESUS was very tolerant. He would neither persecute Himself, nor allow His disciples to persecute. He would teach and entreat, but not try to make people good or orthodox by force. Nor would He resent personal affronts. The people of a Samaritan village once treated Him very unkindly and disrespectfully, and when His disciples, James and John, saw it, they said, "Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven and consume them, as Elijah did? But He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

And in the parable of the Tares and the Wheat He teaches, that men are not fit for the task of judging and punishing the world,—that God alone is competent to that office, and that to Him it should be left.

Jesus intimates that even good men, if they were allowed to attempt to rid the world of bad men, would be in danger of ridding it of good men sometimes by mistake. But if the liberty of weeding the world were allowed at all, it is probable that bad men would seize the office, and send good people out of the world, not in mistake, but on purpose, from motives of selfishness, malignity, or revenge. Bad people would often be under temptation to get good men out of their way, if God or society gave them permission to dispose of them according to their own wishes. It is natural for the thief to bear the honest policeman a grudge, and to dispatch him when he can; and it is as natural for the selfish or bigoted priest to wish to get rid of a good conscientious man, and a faithful teacher of the people.

And as a matter of fact, when men have undertaken the office of inquisitors and persecutors, they have stoned or crucified, imprisoned or burnt, not the worst or most worthless, but the best, the greatest, and the most useful men. They have not plucked up the wheat with the tares, but plucked up the wheat, and allowed the tares to grow.

And even when persecution takes the milder

form of slander, church censure, and excommunication, it often passes by the unmistakably bad, and selects its victims from the faithful and good. Good, brave men are often, in *consequence* of their goodness and bravery, obnoxious to civil and religious authorities, as John the Baptist was to Herod and his vicious wife, and as Jesus was to the rulers of the Jews. And when enraged and disappointed sinners have the opportunity of ridding themselves of their tormentors, we know what happens.

We know something of what priests and politicians have done in times past in the way of persecution. The history of the Church is a sufficiently black and bloody one. But if Christ, instead of discountenancing persecution, both by His words and example, had authorized it, it might perhaps have been worse.

There is a tendency to persecute in all living things. Birds and beasts, insects and fishes, reptiles and men, are all persecutors by nature. They are all selfish, and try to frighten or destroy those who come between them and their desired gratifications. The lark that sings so sweetly, tries to destroy or drive away all other larks, that attempt to gain the affections of the bird which he desires for his mate. His song, while intended to charm the bird which he covets as his companion, is meant as a challenge to other male birds, or as a warning to them to keep at a respectable distance, and look for mates elsewhere.

It is the same with all birds. They all fight, when they find it necessary to the attainment of their objects. They all try to frighten, or torture, or destroy the birds which come between them and their pleasures. The common rooster will kill all the roosters in the neighborhood, if he can, rather than suffer them to intrude on his walk, or alienate the affections of any of his companions. The gander and the gobbler will do the same.

The wolf and the fox, the elk and the buffalo, the squirrel and the mouse, the hippopotamus and the elephant, the minnow and the whale, all act in the same way. All have their likings, and all will persecute or kill whatever creature interferes with their gratification. The strongest and bravest get their way, and the rest have to help or comfort themselves as well as they can.

It is the same with men and women. We know what men do when they compete for place, or power, or pelf. We know how they slander each other. We know how they fight when fighting is allowed. Even women, when they desire the same man, will pass the limits of truth and righteousness sometimes in what they say of each other. And *men*, when they set their hearts on the same woman, will shed each other's blood.

Boys persecute boys, and girls persecute girls, at school, and, in some cases, even at home.

What wonder if bigger boys and bigger girls persecute each other in the church or the Sunday-

school? Men and women do not become angels the moment they believe in Jesus, or enter the church. Some remain babes in Christ, or retain a portion of their carnal nature, for years, and some, alas! for many years. It was so in the days of the Apostles. Hence Paul says; "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. For whereas there is among you envyings, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, 'I am of Paul;' and another, 'I am of Apollos;' are ye not carnal?"

And human nature has not changed much since the days of Paul. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and it takes time to change it into spirit, and something more than time. The church is the kingdom of God on earth; but the will of God is not always done in it by every member, as it is done in heaven. Churches are mixtures. If the tares and wheat do not grow together in the church as they do in the world, the stems of wheat are not all equally advanced. Christians are not all equally good.

And the best are not wholly good. Divines are not, in every case, all divine. And teachers are not always thoroughly taught. Many people that have something heavenly in their tempers, their desires, their ways, have also something earthly mixed with the heavenly. There are men even in the church sometimes, that love the pre-eminence.

There are also men within the same sacred enclosure, who, though very good in their way, think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. There are persons who believe that their creed is just the truth as it is in Jesus; neither more, nor less, nor otherwise. And they are very zealous for the truth, and wish every one to have as much of it as they have themselves. And they are very kind, and will talk to you, and reason with you, and admonish you, and scold you, and teaze you, and torment you, and almost kill you, to make you as good, as wise and as happy as themselves. They cannot bear to enjoy the perfection of Christian faith and knowledge alone; they are impatient to have all partakers of their own superior blessedness. These people have no idea perhaps that they are persecutors; but other people feel so uncomfortable under the manifestations of their great love for their souls, and their burning zeal for the truth, that they can hardly imagine that persecution would be much more disagreeable.

When members and ministers of the church are ambitious, or envious, or jealous, as they sometimes are, they will make those whom they regard as their rivals or competitors, as uncomfortable as if they were in the hands of inquisitors and persecutors.

Churches and priesthoods that have been long established, that have old creeds, and ancient customs, and places of honor and power, and large salaries

at their disposal, will persecute systematically, and in a more reckless and cruel manner. There are sure to be corrupt men, hypocrites, persons resembling the old Scribes and Pharisees, in such churches and priesthods, and these will persecute in the most relentless manner any who seek to reform their creeds, their customs, or their laws. And persons of this description are sure to make their appearance.

In short, in all Churches, and in all corporations, and in all societies, and in all ranks, and among people of all ages, the tendency to persecute will show itself; and nothing can free a man from that tendency, but the richest measures of love and wisdom. Science cannot do it; learning cannot do it; art cannot do it; infidelity cannot do it; worldly refinement and culture cannot do it. Nothing can do it but such attainments in holy love and heavenly wisdom as raise a man entirely above the animal, carnal, selfish nature, and transform him into the image of God.

Freedom from all tendency to persecute is one of the last and highest attainments of regenerated humanity; and he who is zealous for the maintenance and spread of truth, and for the triumph of virtue and piety, and at the same time is free from the desire to employ any other means for the accomplishment of his objects than gentle words and a good example, has reached the highest attainable point of human excellence.

How many examples of this highest form of

wisdom and virtue the history of the Church or of the world presents to us, I do not know; but it presents one. Jesus was an example of this highest form of spiritual excellence. His love of man, and His zeal for God and truth and righteousness, were unbounded; yet He had no disposition to persecute, nor would He allow His followers to persecute. He knew better than any other person who were right, and who were wrong in their belief, and He had a power which no one on earth besides Him ever wielded; yet He would not persecute. He could have silenced His slanderers, and crushed His enemies by main force; but He refused to do so. He knew who were tares and who were wheat, and He could have plucked up the one without disturbing the other; but He would not. He could have played the lion, but He chose to be the lamb. He would bear persecution, but not practise it. He sent forth His disciples as sheep among wolves, and exhorted them to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. He laid down the law of gentleness and meekness, of long-suffering and patience, as the law of regenerated humanity, and He obeyed that law, and called on all His friends to follow His example. His freedom from intolerance and persecution was complete.

And He stood alone in this. The sects and priests and religious teachers of His day were persecutors of the most intolerant and relentless de-

scription. The priests and princes, and philosophers and mobs of paganism were persecutors. Jesus was gentle. He was the physician, seeking to heal, not kill. He was the good shepherd, laying down His life for His sheep. He wept, He bled; but never raged. Even when He spoke of coming calamities, the punishments of sin, He did it, not in anger, but in tenderness and tears. There is not the slightest taint of intolerance either in His doctrine or His life. Nor is there the least manifestation of the spirit of revenge. He uses His power in healing the sick, and feeding the hungry, and raising the dead, but never in coercing unbelievers, or destroying opponents.

In this, as in so many other respects, Jesus is a miracle. This poor young man, reared among bigots, surrounded with persecutors, in a world in which all priesthoods, all princes, all religions, all sects, all philosophers, all mobs, all men, persecute, and see no harm in it, stands alone, an example and an advocatè of perfect toleration. He founds a kingdom, and provides for its extension, and for the maintenance of order, and the administration of its affairs, without either policeman or soldier, jailor or executioner, by the use of moral force, and moral force alone. Infidels denounce persecution, and persecute. They denounce it, yet enact it by law. Jesus alone is consistent, relying on truth and love alone for the accomplishment of His grand object from first to last.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JESUS AND PRAYER.

JESUS was a man of prayer—of much prayer. He prayed while engaged in His public labors, and when weary with His work, He often retired into mountains and desert places for prayer; and on one occasion, we are told, He spent a whole night in prayer. Prayer seems to have been His rest and recreation. His temper and behaviour, His discourses, and His manner of working miracles, all seem to me to indicate that He lived continually in the spirit of prayer. And there is a baptism of holy love and heavenly power, without which preaching will be like sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, that cannot be obtained or preserved without prayer. The power of a preacher for good is not altogether in himself, but in God; and that power is to be secured by prayer.

Hence, Jesus not only prayed Himself, but taught His disciples to pray. He spake a parable—He spake two or three parables in fact—to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

And He gave His disciples many excellent directions with regard to the proper performance of the duty of prayer. He gave them also a remarkable form of prayer as a model; a form which has nothing equal to it, and nothing like unto it, under heaven.

Jesus never intimates that prayer cannot move God, and that its only use consists in its influence on our own minds. Jesus was a great philosopher, but His philosophy was of the old-fashioned, child-like, common-sense kind, and not of the lofty, skeptical, metaphysical description. He leaned strongly to the idea that as God made man in His own image, there must be something in God like man, when man is in his proper state; as well as something in a good and upright man like God. And He talks in such a way on prayer, as to leave the impression that, as a kind, good father may really be moved by the entreaties of his children, so God may be influenced by the prayers of His people.

He was aware that God knows what we need before we ask Him; but that consideration He used, not to prove that prayer was unnecessary, or that it cannot move God, but only to show that we need not make long prayers, or use vain repetitions, but just state our wants in a few plain words to God, and urge them on His gracious attention with simple, child-like, loving earnestness.

Jesus appears to have been acquainted with the laws of Nature, but He seems to have regarded them as the laws of God, and to have gone on the supposition, that He who made them, could suspend or control them, and that God had done nothing to make Himself the slave of necessity or fate, or even of His own marvellous workmanship.

Besides, for anything that appears to the contrary in His teachings, Jesus, like some of His followers, may have regarded the law of prayer as a law of Nature, as much as the law of work ; and considered it quite as consistent in God, and quite as natural, to make the attainment of the good things we need to depend on praying, as on working.

It is quite possible that as Jesus was infinitely superior to skeptical, and metaphysical, and worldly philosophers on other subjects, He was not much below them on the subject of the laws of nature, and the power of prayer. And it is not wise in professing Christians to sacrifice the plain teachings of Christ, to the opinions of His enemies ; or to torture His words, to bring them into harmony with metaphysical or so-called philosophical theories. We may safely take Christ's words in their plain and obvious meaning, and stand by them against the great swelling words of a thousand vain and godless philosophers.

And I confess for myself, that I have seen so much of the folly and mischievousness of worldly wisdom, and so much of the wisdom, and worth, and glory of what the wise men of the world regard as childish folly, that I should sooner pray to be converted and become as a little child, than ask to be exalted to the loftiest heights of the best philosophy the anti-christian world can boast.

I know the character of the Teacher whom I trust, and I have not a doubt, that His word shall stand

when the wisdom of the world has passed away. I know so well, and I have proved so thoroughly, in more ways than one, the infinite superiority of Jesus and His religion, to the best and most boasted philosophers and philosophies of the loud and confident party of dogmatic anti-dogmatists, who call themselves rationalists, that I would rather follow Jesus blindfold in the dark, than be led along by them in daylight, with the help of all the jaundiced eyes and colored spectacles the clamorous infidel world has got at its command. I will trust my instincts, the inspirations of Heaven; and my common-sense and conscience, the gifts of Him that made me; against all the specious logic of a world of proud ungodly wranglers. And when God's own inspirations, and the voice of His wisdom and holiness deep down in my soul, tell me that Christianity is true and wise and good, while in my own experience I prove it to be the strength and joy of my whole being, philosophy and infidelity may rave or reason as they will, I am for Jesus, all for Jesus, and always for Jesus,

While life, or thought, or being last,
Or immortality endures.

CHAPTER XIX.

JESUS—THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

THERE is one part of His ministry in which it is thought by some Jesus ought not to be imitated. I refer to the manner in which He spake of the Scribes and Pharisees, and in which, on two or three occasions, He addressed them personally. Unitarians and rationalists generally seem to have come to the conclusion, that when Jesus came in contact with this class of men, He lost His temper, and spake unadvisedly: and there are some Christians who think that His conduct in this case, though right in *Him*, ought not to be imitated by His followers. Is this view correct?

We do not think so. We believe that in this, as in all cases, He is to be regarded as our example.

We take it for granted, first, that the Scribes and Pharisees were, as a class, what Christ represented them as being, and that they did what He represented them as doing.

We take it for granted, next, that Jesus had discovered that there was no ground to hope for their conversion by ordinary means.

And we take it for granted, thirdly, that the only way to prevent them from hindering the spread and triumph of the Gospel among others, was to destroy their influence by stripping the wolves of

their sheep's clothing, and showing them to the people in their true character.

First, we take it for granted that the Scribes and Pharisees were, as a class, what Christ represented them as being, and that they did, and were accustomed to do, what He represented them as doing. And what was that?

They were hypocrites, pretending to a goodness which they had not; thus cheating men, and offering the most grievous insult to God. They went through what were called religious duties, not out of regard to God, or respect for goodness; but to obtain the respect and honor of their neighbors and countrymen. All their works they did to be seen of men. Hence they prayed standing in the synagogues and at the corners of the streets. They sounded a trumpet before them when they gave alms. They went unwashed, and put on a sad countenance, when they fasted, that they might appear unto men to fast.

Again: They taught for divine doctrines the commandments of men. They made void God's law by their traditions. They sold indulgences to cruel and ungrateful children, to rob and starve their parents. And they sold indulgences to others.

They were greedy of honor. They loved the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

They were proud. They thought themselves righteous, and despised others. They were ambitious of power. They wished to be masters of men's faith and consciences.

They were greedy of gain. They devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers.

They were heartless, cruel. They bound heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders; but they themselves would not move them with one of their fingers. They were always telling others what to do, but would not do it themselves.

They shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men. They would neither go in themselves, nor suffer those that were entering to go in. They locked the door of the treasury of truth, instead of opening it; and took away the key of knowledge. They would neither learn nor teach what was true and good.

They dealt in trifles, vanities, and lies. They were blind,—the blindest of the blind,—for they would not see. They were blind guides,—blind leaders of the blind.

They made much of things that were little, and little of things that were great. They strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel. They paid tithe of mint, anise and cummin, and neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, beneficence and truth.

Their desire was, not to *be* good, but to *appear* good. They made clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within were full of extortion and excess.

They plundered men, that they might live in luxury and licentiousness.

They compassed sea and land to make proselytes, but made those whom they converted worse instead of better.

They were like graves, grown over with grass, and they that walked over them knew not what was beneath. They were like whited sepulchres, appearing beautiful outwards, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

They were persecutors and murderers,—persecutors and murderers of the best of men,—of prophets and philanthropists; and while they murdered the great and good of their own day, they built the tombs and garnished the sepulchres, of the great and good of days gone by.

They slandered, they persecuted, and finally crucified, the greatest Teacher, the fairest and the best of men, that had ever appeared on earth. They called Him a glutton and a drunkard; a seditious man and a traitor; a Sabbath-breaker and a blasphemer; a madman and a devil; an ally of Beelzebub; and even Beelzebub himself.

They opposed Him in His work continually, and that in the meanest and wickedest way. They propounded to Him captious questions, with a

view to entangle Him in His speech. They were constantly trying to obtain from Him some utterance, that would make Him unpopular with the people. They set spies to attend Him, and report His words and deeds. They tried to get Him into trouble with the Roman government. They tried to make Him out an enemy to Moses. They joined with other parties to ensnare Him. They blamed Him for His most generous deeds,—His loving and condescending labors for the outcast, and neglected, and most miserable classes. Time after time they tried to kill Him. They attributed His beneficent miracles to the power of the wicked one, and represented Him, the model of all benignity, as in league with the prince of malignant spirits. And many other such things they did and said, too many for us to repeat.

What was He to do with regard to such people? Was He to pass them by without notice? Was He to rebuke the little sinners and let the great ones escape? Was He to be stern towards poor sinners, and gentle, indulgent towards rich ones? Was He to be loud in His condemnation of honest open profligates, and pass the hypocritical profligates and plunderers, the sanctimonious liars and murderers, without a word of reproof?

Would it have been consistent? Would it have been honest? Would it not have laid Him open to suspicion? Would it not have been attributed to fear, to cowardice, or to partiality? Would it

not have damaged His reputation, and destroyed His influence? Would it not have been wicked and inexcusable?

Was He not *bound* to speak to those sinners? And if He was bound to speak to them at all, was He not bound to speak to them plainly,—to rebuke them faithfully,—to make them feel what kind of creatures they were, if they had any feeling left, and make them ashamed, if their sense of shame was not extinct?

And if sense, and shame, and conscience were gone, was it not necessary to make their hypocrisy and villany manifest to others, that they might be delivered from their soul-destroying power?

And was not the course He took necessary to make manifest His abhorrence of their most evil ways,—to demonstrate His honesty, His fidelity, and His almighty courage,—to show that He did not fear their hate, their malice, or their rage,—to display His power, and to show His superiority, over the richest, the mightiest, and the most fair-seeming men of His age; and to make the breach between their hollowness, their earthliness, their selfishness, and His sincerity, and holiness, and philanthropy, plain, and palpable, and eternal?

My own conviction is that the conduct of Jesus was just right;—that in a position of the utmost difficulty He conducted Himself with infinite propriety,—that out of regard to the interests of true religion, and to the salvation of the mass of His

countrymen, and to the cause of truth and righteousness in all ages and in all lands, He was bound to do exactly as He did, and that every preacher of His Gospel is bound, under similar circumstances, to do the same.

True, He called them hard names,—very hard names ; He called them hypocrites, fools, serpents, vipers, enemies to knowledge, enemies to righteousness, extortioners, thieves, liars, murderers,—murderers of the best and greatest of God's children ;—but that was just what they were. And it was just what the people required to know about them. And it was just what was necessary to make known the greatness and power and glory of Jesus Himself, as the messenger of truth, as the friend of righteousness, as the ambassador of God, and as the Saviour and Judge of men.

There are other considerations tending to justify the course which Jesus took with regard to the Scribes and Pharisees. The seeds of the great evils which He rebuked in them, are in our common human nature. They germinate and spring up in every religious society, and among all professional religious teachers. They have shown themselves since then in His own Church. They have shown themselves in every denomination, from the Catholics down to the Methodists and Quakers.

And these evils are among the greatest hindrances to the spread and triumph of the Gospel.

They are one of the principal causes of infidelity. They paralyze the Church. They keep the nations in darkness.

It was necessary therefore that Jesus should put His Church on its guard against those evils,—that He should hold them up to eternal dread and hate; and that He should teach us, by His example, how to deal with them whenever they make their appearance either in ourselves or others.

The twenty-third chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and the whole history of Christ, in fact, should be privately studied, and publicly and honestly expounded, in every Church, by every Christian minister on earth. We need such a means of grace to make us and to keep us right.

CHAPTER XX.

JESUS' CONSIDERATE TENDERNESS.

JESUS was very tender of the weak. He would “not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.” He loved the young man who showed signs of a good disposition, though he had not courage and trust sufficient to enable him to step from the lower to the higher life. He did not scold people because they could not come up at once to the highest

standard of faith, or knowledge, or holiness, but fostered goodness in its first faint beginnings, and patiently waited for its growth and perfection.

What an amount of patience and forbearance He showed toward His slow-going and often blundering disciples! Perhaps He knew that slow-growing trees make the hardest and most durable timber; while things that shoot up like Jonah's gourd, in a night, often wither and disappear like that gourd, in a day. Passion may blaze out in a moment, but intelligence, great talents, and solid virtue are often of slow development.

He was very patient with His scholars, as we have just remarked. They were very ignorant, and very slow to learn; but He never got angry with them. He gave them line upon line, and precept upon precept, and waited patiently for His lessons to take effect on their minds and hearts. They were carnal, worldly, in their expectations, but He gave them time to pass through the process of an intellectual and moral birth into a higher life.

And his gentleness and forbearance were justified by the result. Within a very short time after His resurrection, they became new men. Their thoughts, their hopes, their characters were transformed, and they became the bold and zealous and self-sacrificing ministers of a spiritual prince and a spiritual kingdom.

Jesus was very lenient towards doubters. When John, disappointed in his expectations of Jesus,

and languishing in prison, came to doubt whether Jesus really was the Messiah or not, and sent unto Him two of His disciples, and said unto Him, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" He made no complaints, uttered no rebuke, expressed no astonishment, but, in the kindest and most considerate manner said: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he who-soever shall not be stumbled or embarrassed by anything mysterious he may see in Me." And then, instead of reproaching John for his weakness, or charging him with inconsistency for doubting his Messiahship after all he had said and all he had seen on the banks of the Jordan and elsewhere, or expressing doubts of His sincerity or sanity, He begins to speak of him in the friendliest spirit and in the highest terms, and to descant in the most touching manner on the inconstancy and unreasonableness of the people who showed so little respect for so great and good a man, and so transient a regard to the doctrine they had heard from His lips.

When Thomas showed such unreasonable and obstinate incredulity, demanding a kind of evidence which can hardly ever be given, and which no one has a right to expect, Jesus showed the utmost forbearance towards him, complied with his unreason-

able demands, and simply uttered one of His deep, philosophical oracles, "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

There was one that was worse than an unbeliever. Peter had heard far more than John the Baptist had heard, and had seen far more than John had seen. And he had not only had the most infallible proofs of his Master's Messiahship, but had received a multitude of the most unmistakable tokens of His kindness; yet he, without even the excuse of unbelief, denied his Master,—denied Him with oaths and curses, saying, "I know not the man." Could Jesus look over that? Did not this destroy the last remains of His confidence in man, and cause Him to abandon the race in despair? One of the first messages He sent on the morning of His resurrection, by the dear women who kept so close to Him, and stood by Him so firmly, was, "Go and tell my disciples and PETER, behold I go before you unto Galilee." "My disciples and PETER!" Instead of abandoning the poor creature, he was only anxious to save him from being swallowed up of overmuch sorrow.

O, Lamb of God, was ever love,
Was ever life like Thine?

Dear, Blessed Saviour, we say, we take Thee as our model; but when shall we love, when shall we bear, when shall we forgive like Thee?

CHAPTER XXI.

JESUS—NARROW-MINDEDNESS.

THERE was nothing like bigotry, narrow-mindedness, or jealousy in Jesus. Nor was there any desire to confine the ministry of love and truth to a select body, working under one head, or according to one unvarying rule. On some occasions He forbade people whom He had healed to preach; but that was not because He thought they had no right to preach, but because He was afraid of too much fame or popularity. On other occasions, when there was no such danger, He left people at liberty to preach as much as they pleased. In one case He said to a man whom He had cured of a fearful affliction, and who besought the Saviour that he might keep with Him,—“Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee.” And the man did as he was bid.

Jesus seems to have wished all to preach, who had anything good to say, when there was no particular reason for their silence. One of His mottoes was, “Freely ye have received, freely give:” and another was, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

On one occasion John said to Jesus, “Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.”

Poor creatures. *They* were in full orders. It was their *business* to preach and 'cast out devils. And they were in the traces. But this man, hanging loose, and choosing his own sphere of labor, and having no one to direct him, and no one to answer for his orthodoxy, how could *he* think of taking upon himself so important a work? Presumption! "We forbade him, Master." And Jesus said unto them, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us. And the very fact that he wrought his miracles in My name, is proof that he respects Me, that he believes in Me, and that he cannot therefore lightly speak evil of Me." This would probably be the disciples' last attempt at priestly assumption and dictation. What wisdom and goodness we find in Jesus at every step of our investigation! Thanks be to God that ever He allowed such love, such liberality, such wisdom, and such sweetness to appear in mortal form.

There is a lesson here for preachers perhaps in their dealings with each other and with their younger brethren. Even if the knowledge of some preachers were perfect, and their judgments infallible, they should not expect their brethren, and especially their younger brethren, to see it all at once. Nor should they, when they fail to see it, require them blindly to submit to their authority. They should allow them time to think and learn.

And if in their investigations their younger

brethren should stumble into error sometimes, they ought not to come down upon them with hard names, denouncing them as heretics, and threatening them with deposition and excommunication. They should allow them a little liberty, and a little time. They will come right probably before long, under gentle and loving treatment, and prove all the better preachers, as well as all the better men, for being allowed, in their search for truth, to pay respect to their own judgments and to their own consciences.

If theological praters were what the Church and the world wanted, the forcing system might be the best; but if it be earnest, enlightened, clear-seeing, far-seeing, honest-hearted, good, Christ-like men, and able ministers that are required, the tender nursing-mother system of the patient, long-forbearing, gentle, loving Jesus is the best. It is the system which all noble and generous minds like to be acted on towards themselves, and it is the system on which such minds will always feel disposed to act towards others.

How strange that any man should fancy himself infallible! And how strange that any one who does *not* fancy himself infallible, should set himself to be dictator to the judgments and consciences of other men! Has Jesus ordained some of His disciples to be masters and others slaves? Or does He exhort us all to regard each other as brethren? True, brethren are not all equal. Some are older

and some are younger, some are weaker, and some are stronger ; but all are free. And the strong are not to crush the weak, but to bear their burdens. And all are to be mutual helpers in their turn.

Are those really the wisest men who are most impatient to bring others to accept unquestioningly their views, and receive them as their lords? Are they not always the least enlightened, and the most unteachable? "Blessed are the meek ; for they shall inherit the earth." "Blessed are the lowly ; for they shall be exalted." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, when ye love one another."

There are ladders that lead down into the depths of humility : blessed are those that descend them, and dwell with the lowly. There are ladders that lead upwards to the towering heights of pride ; but woe unto those who ascend them. The God of Heaven shall frown on their aspirings, and His breath shall sweep them from their forbidden eminence into the depths of shame and ruin.

CHAPTER XXII.

JESUS' GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT.

JESUS Himself took time for growth. He did not enter on His public ministry till He was about thirty years of age. It was the same with His

fore-runner. And it is the men who have shown most respect to their own minds and consciences, giving them time to unfold and ripen according to the laws of their nature, that show the tenderest regards to the judgments and consciences of others.

Those who have used violence towards their own minds, are the parties who are most prone to use violence towards the minds of others. Those who have dealt honestly with themselves, are the parties most disposed to favor honesty in others, and to let sincerity have its perfect work.

And this is the way to multiply both superior minds and superior characters. Hypocrites can make hypocrites, and bigots can make bigots in next to no time, just as Moses produced frogs and lice in Egypt; but for men to produce men, and for saints to produce saints, and for able and godly ministers to produce able and godly ministers, time, and patience, and prayer, and the power of the Holy Spirit are necessary.

It would seem, from several of Christ's parables, that He considered all good, both in individuals and Churches of gradual, and even of slow and quiet growth. The working of the leaven in the meal seems to represent the working of Christian truth, both in the hearts of individual men and women, and in human society at large. And the growth of the seed, producing first the blade, then the ear, and then the full ripe corn in the ear, seems to have been intended to represent the growth of

knowledge and goodness, both in particular souls, and in the Church and the world. And the growth of the branch in the vine, and its gradual increase of fruitfulness, favors the same view.

And we know that lambs do not become full-grown sheep in a day. And it is not a single handful of fodder that will suffice for their growth. And the Prodigal Son did not leap from the hog-pen to his father's house at one jump. Time is required for all great and beneficent changes both in man and in nature. The babe does not instantly become a man; nor does the man gain at once the sobriety and wisdom of age. Experience is man's best teacher, and her plan is to give wisdom in drops, and not in bucketsful.

And so in religion. The new-born babe must feed on the sincere milk of the Word if it would thrive, and become a full-grown man in Christ. And that is a kind of milk that can neither be taken into the spiritual stomach, nor digested or assimilated in a hurry.

And in nature, seeds do not become plants, nor suckers and saplings trees in an hour. Nor does night change instantly into day, nor winter into summer. And science, both in the individual and in society, advances slowly. Let people get converted, and let them get filled with knowledge and all goodness, as quickly as possible; but do not let them blame or think ill of others if they find their progress towards perfection a journey of years.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JESUS WAS HOPEFUL.

JESUS was a hopeful laborer in the cause of humanity. He believed the world could be converted, and that through His labors it would be converted. He said, "That He, if He were lifted up, would draw all men unto Him." He talked of gathering all the scattered sheep of humanity into one fold, that there might be one flock and one shepherd. From His parables of the Leaven, and of the Grain of Mustard Seed, it is plain that He anticipated the unlimited growth and expansion of His Church.

And when He commissioned His followers to go and make disciples of all nations, He must have believed that the task to which He appointed them was a possibility. And He meant what He said when He taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

In this too we would make Him our example. Hope is a great comforter. And it not only cheers but strengthens the Christian laborer. While it makes us happy, it renders us efficient. And what a blessed hope this is! What a glorious object, THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD!

What a blessing the conversion and salvation

of a single soul! What a blessing for time! What a blessing for eternity! What a blessing the conversion of a whole family, where parents and children rejoice together in the smile of God, and in the prospect of eternal glory. What a vast, what a transcendent blessing,—what an unspeakable accumulation of blessings, the conversion of the world! What a change from darkness to light; from sin to holiness; from misery to bliss! What a sight to see Satan retiring to give place to God! To see the horrors of sin, and vice, and crime withdrawing, to make way for righteousness, purity, and love. What a sight,—a world without want, or war, or wo; one vast extended paradise, glorious in holiness, and rapturous with joy! And all this but a preparation for something higher, vaster and more glorious still. What a joy to feel that we are laboring for so glorious an object!

What a bliss to feel that this our soul-sustaining, soul-transporting hope rests on the promise, the purpose and the character of God! What an object to see the infinite and eternal excellency embodying itself in His intelligent creatures, filling their hearts to overflowing with all conceivable and inconceivable good, and pouring itself forth in streams and floods of blessing through a boundless and eternal universe! And this is the hope—part of the hope—that filled the heart of Jesus while laboring and suffering on earth.

And He shall be the head of this blessed and

glorious universe. He shall receive the love, the reverence, the gratitude, the rapturous thanksgivings and praise of this world of redeemed and happy souls. Men, women and children ; Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs ; great souls, containing each in itself a world of light and love—great preachers, great reformers, great philanthropists, great poets, great writers, great rulers, great sufferers, great saints of every rank, from every walk of life, who have served God and honored religion, and helped to bless the world—all these shall meet together there, pure and spotless, happy and glorious, with Jesus at their head, full as all heaven, and filling all heaven, with heavenly light and love. This is the joy that was set before Him when He endured the cross, and despised the shame, and gave up his life for our race. This is the fruit of the travail of His soul. He saw it from afar in the days of His humiliation, and was satisfied. He sees it now a present, living and eternal reality, and is glorified ; and His infinite soul, and the infinite soul of His Father, are blending in sympathy in eternal ecstasies. Heaven is full, and all its blessed inhabitants are in transports, and they raise their voices like sweet thunders, and like the sound of many waters, and sing, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” And the spirits of life fall down,

and cast their crowns before Him and worship Him. And the worlds of the redeemed sing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living ones, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

We share the work, we will indulge the hopes, and, if we are faithful, we shall share the bliss, the triumph, and the glory of our Head forever. If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him. We shall enter into the joy of our Lord.

But we must return from our flights into the worlds unseen, and to the joys of the future, to the scene of our labors, and to our mixed and yet imperfect lot. All well. But we will work in hope. We have been in Canaan, and we have brought some clusters of its rich fruit, and we will feast

while we toil. We will toil, and every now and then lift up our thoughts to the bliss of the worlds above, and to the hills from whence cometh our help.

Yes, Jesus was hopeful. He saw, though afar, the day of the world's redemption, and was glad.

But His hopes were by no means of the wild and thoughtless kind. He understood the greatness of the work in which He and His followers were engaged. He saw the difficulties that crowded the way. He was aware of the sacrifices that He and His people would have to make. He saw that a fearful and long-continued conflict was inevitable, and He told His followers that it would be through terrible hardships, through grievous persecutions, that they would extend His dominion through the earth. "Do not think," said He, "that all will be done in peace: there will be strife, and war, and bloodshed. Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. They will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake. Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, shall think that he doeth God service." Still He hoped; and taught His followers to hope. "Fear not," said He, "Fear not,

little flock ; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom : " and give it you He will. " Fear not : are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? Yet not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. Are ye not of more value than many sparrows ? The very hairs of your head are all numbered. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace. Ye shall have sorrow for a time, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy : but your joy shall never be turned into sorrow. Fear not : I have overcome the world ; and ye shall overcome it too. "

It was a gradual conversion of the world therefore that Jesus anticipated. He believed that as the seed expands and gradually becomes a tree, so His Church would grow till it should fill the earth. He believed that as the leaven hid in the meal worked on, though slowly, till the whole was leavened, so the principles of His Gospel would work on in society, till the whole mass of humanity should be transformed.

He knew how slow His disciples were to get rid of their national prejudices, and of their carnal expectations ; and He knew how tardily the world would rid itself of its errors, its superstitions, its vices and its prejudices, and come to accept the exalted principles of the Gospel. On an ordinary farm, says He, the same man both sows and reaps ; but here the saying is true, one sows, and another reaps. One labors, and another enters into His

labors. But all is right. At the harvest home of the ransomed world, both he that sows and he that reaps shall rejoice together. And Christ could wait. And here also, in the union of His cheerful working and patient waiting, He shall be our model.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JESUS—HIS MANNER OF PREACHING.

THERE does not appear to have been anything studied or artistic in Christ's manner. I should hardly think He ever took any lessons in elocution, or in attitudinarianism. I get the impression from reading His life, that His manner was very natural;—that He trusted for effect, not to studied modulations of His voice, or to the action of His limbs, but to the fit words and mighty thoughts He uttered, and to the spirit and feeling with which He spoke.

I meet with nothing amusing in Christ's discourses, and yet I cannot help thinking, that many of His remarks, and especially His hard and startling hits at the proud, sanctimonious enemies, that sought to entrap Him and take His life, must have been received with many a smile, and many a burst of applause by many of His

hearers. He never sought applause; He never engineered for a smile; He was too full of compassion for mankind, too much oppressed with the weight of His vast and awful work for that. But truth, somehow, even plain truth, will at times take such striking forms, and fit so aptly particular cases, and hit so heavily and crushingly some self-conceited piece of ignorance, presumption and hypocrisy, that it works like wit, and produces a smile in spite of fate.

Great Excitement.

I fancy Jesus had no sleepy hearers. I never fall asleep while reading the Gospels, and I am well persuaded that no one slept while the words they record were sounding in their ears, or the deeds they chronicle were wrought in their presence.

That three years' ministry of Jesus was a stirring time for Judea. What wonder-stricken people I see moving about! What groups of eager disputants I see in controversy at the corners of the streets of the great cities. What numbers of excited people I see running to and fro in the country towns and villages, carrying the strange tidings of what they have heard and seen to their fathers and mothers, to their wives and children, to their friends and neighbors.

And there on the little farm, while the plow moves idly, or the sower stops in his course, men

tell the news of the wonderful man and the wonderful deeds that are rousing the country from end to end. And there in the work-shop the men are talking while they weave the cloth, or spin the yarn, or dye the wool, or make the garment, or forge the link, or form the chain, or twist the cord.

And there on the coast among the carpenters and fishermen; and yonder in the Bank, the Temple, and the office of the Publican, and down among the outcasts, and up among the priests, and in the schools and synagogues, everywhere the question is, What is He? The Messiah? Or one of the Prophets? Why not the Messiah? Will the Messiah, when He cometh, work more miracles than this man does? Will He work greater ones? Will He preach more powerfully? Will He be a better friend to the poor and the suffering?

But what say the Scribes? And if He be the Messiah, why does He not sweep away the Romans, and take His place at our head, and lead us on to the conquest of the world?

Some thought of Jesus in silence, or spoke only to their friends of Him in whispers. He had touched their hearts. He had made them sensible of their sinfulness. He had melted their souls into penitence. Ah! when shall we hear Him again, and receive from His lips the sweet words of pardon and peace? And others answered joyfully, 'He has spoken the words of peace to us, and

He meant them for all who are weary of sin and bent on returning to God.' And peace flowed on like a river, visiting the hearts of thousands. The Parables of the lost sheep, and the great creditor, and the prodigal son both melted hearts that were hard, and comforted hearts that were sad, and in many a soul there were opened fountains of joy.

And good people talk of Him. What gracious words,—what oracles of heavenly truth and tenderness those are, that fall from His lips! What sweetness, what purity, what holiness there is in His life! How different from so many of our teachers! What a joy to hear Him. What a transport to see Him. What a heaven to be near Him and enjoy His smile!

The whole country was excited. His hearers were doubly awake. There was a ferment in every circle. Never was there so great and widespread an awakening of mind: and never such a blending and seething of strange discordant thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears, joy and vexation, truth and error, good and evil. But truth proved mightiest; mightier than the mightiest of its enemies; mightier than death; mightier than hell. And truth and love, after struggling amid clouds and darkness, and blood and vapor, shone forth like a double sun, and spread their beams, opening for the world a better day.

And the world has never returned to its former

death-like sleep since that strange awaking. That breaking up of the great deeps of thought and feeling changed the course and history of the world. Millions of Gentiles whose souls lay dead within them, were awakened to a new life, and became new men. All nations were shaken in mind as by a moral earthquake, and they slept no more. No torpor like that which benumbed the thought, the feeling and the conscience of humanity before the appearance of Jesus, has ever crept over the earth again, even in the darkest ages of the Church. He awoke the world once for all time, and mankind can sleep their old deep sleep of death no more.

If preachers preach, and teachers teach, and writers write, and Christians live the good old Gospel lessons, and tell the strange and touching story of the Saviour's life and death, the Church will still live on, and love will grow, and righteousness will spread, and the world will change its temper and its ways, and Jesus shall be Head and King of a regenerated race.

CHAPTER XXV.

JESUS AS A REFORMER.

Christ a Constructive Reformer.

JESUS was a constructive and conservative, not a revolutionary and destructive reformer. He sought to develop all that was good in all systems, and left the bad to perish. He made no war on Judaism, on Paganism, on Ebionitism, but simply taught all that was good in each, carried all that was good in each to perfection, and left the rest to die.

He did the same with regard to institutions, laws, customs, forms and modes of worship. He denounces none, He enjoins none; though He denounces what is evil, and inculcates what is good, in all. This is His plan:

He forms a new society or kingdom, small in its dimensions, but perfect in its principles, and leaves it there to grow and expand, and absorb the life of all other kingdoms, while they wax old and disappear.

There are weeds of which it is impossible to rid the soil by weeding. To destroy them, we plow the soil deep, put in the seed of wholesome, useful, quick-growing, hardy plants, which get the start of the weeds, take up rapidly the elements of fer-

tility in the soil, and monopolize the light and warmth of the sun, and the refreshing rain of heaven, and starve and stifle the weeds, which perish before they can bear seed, or even produce strong roots, and so the ground is cleared.

Just so does Jesus. He does not go about attempting to pluck up every form of moral, theological, political, religious, or social weed, but He breaks the soil of humanity, plows deep, scatters the seeds of truth and goodness freely, secures for them an early germination, a rapid growth, a hardy, vigorous life, and they gather up the elements of spiritual fertility, monopolize the moral sunshine and showers, while the weeds of vice, of error, and of folly die, leaving the world a paradise. Wesley, in one of his small tracts, without referring to the example of Christ, proposes a similar plan for the extirpation of Catholic errors in Ireland.

The silence of Christ with regard to forms of government, forms of worship, forms of society, peculiar institutions, customs, laws, amusements, has been regarded by some as an error, and looked on by others with bewilderment. As the world grows wiser and better, His course will be seen to be the perfection of wisdom and goodness, as superior to the policy of most other religious reformers, as heaven is to earth.

The cry of many reformers of the present day is,
"Destroy everything that cannot give a good rea-

son for its existence." We say, "Spare everything that you cannot give a very good reason for destroying." A thing may have a good reason for its existence, which it does not carry on its forehead. It may be able to give a good reason for its existence to some, though not to you. A bucket may contain a gallon of water, and yet be unable to give a drop to a corked or close-necked bottle. It has often been found that laws and customs had good reasons for existing, which no one suspected till they were abolished by the wisdom of fools. The farmers of England destroyed the rooks because they stole a little of their seed, and then found that the grubs on which the crows had chiefly fed, consumed the greater part of their harvest. I killed the snakes out in Nebraska, and then found that the ground squirrels, on which the snakes had fed, became a nuisance unendurable. Reformers are not always as wise as they suppose, nor are those who differ from them, and try to moderate their zeal, always as foolish as they imagine them. The mad and unrestrained destructiveness of modern revolutionists, threatens to involve both Church and State in anarchy and ruin.

Jesus not a Patch-work Reformer.

Jesus had no idea of patch-work reform either with regard to individuals, systems, or churches. His plan was to have things all new, and all of a piece. No sensible man, says He, takes a piece of

new cloth, and stitches it on to an old garment; for the patch of new would pull away part of the old, and the rent would be made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old stiff leathern bottles: else the bottles burst, and the wine runneth out.

And I am not going to have a patch-work religion, made up partly from John, partly from the Pharisees, and partly from myself. I will have an entirely new one. Nor will I put the new wine of my doctrine into old, shrunken, withered hearts. I will put it into new, unsophisticated, expansive souls. If men in their present state are not prepared for My teachings, they must be converted and become as little children.

My religion is a new life that works from within, and makes for itself an outer covering of its own, answering to itself. My Church is a living body, and no one can become a member till he becomes a partaker of a new life, and is capable of becoming a living member of the living body. It is life, growth, unity of parts, oneness of spirit, oneness of feeling, spontaneous unity of affection and action that I want; and no patch-work accumulation or jumble of dead discordant elements can give me that.

CHAPTER XXVI.

UNION.

JESUS was for union. He wished all who believed on Him to be one, even as He and His Father were one. He wished for a visible union; a union which the world could see. He intimates that such a union would be conducive to the conversion of the world. 'I pray, O Father, that all who believe on Me may be one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.' What is the exact kind of union which Jesus would have his Church to exhibit, I do not know. Man and wife are one; yet each remains a separate being, and retains a certain amount of independence. The British empire is one, yet it consists of many parts, each having its peculiar institutions, laws, customs, and forms of government. America is one, yet there are many States, and each State has a government and administration of its own. The Union is a union of States. The name of the whole is, United States. The Church is already one to some extent; but has it all the unity it ought to have? We think not. How much ought it to have? We do not know. But this we know, outward unity is nothing except so far as it is preceded by inward unity. And the inward unity is love. Increase in love will bring us into closer intimacy and freer inter-

course. Ever-increasing love will give us an ever-increasing unity of action and form. The great thing therefore is, for all to become more like Christ. If we are more like Christ, we shall be more like one another. "Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other." Things like to the same thing are like to one another. The more we love Christ, the more perfect will be our union. Love is union in essence, and it tends to union in form. The nearer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall come to one another. Love, then, is the great essential. Growth in love should be our great endeavor. This will bring about, not a dead or patchwork union, but a real, living, happy union. An outward patchwork union without much love would do the world no good, however visible. Love will do good when seen, whether there be perfect outward union or not. But if ever a perfect outward union is to take place, love must produce it. Love then is the great thing. It is for love that we must pray, and for love that we must labor.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JESUS AND COMPLAINERS.

JESUS teaches that faithful preachers never satisfy selfish bigots, and hardened religious sinners. John the Baptist came exhibiting the utmost abstemiousness both in meat and drink, in raiment and manners, and they said, He is a madman, he has a devil. Jesus came eating and drinking after the ordinary custom of good religious people, and moved in society as a man among men, exhibiting no offensive or unnecessary singularity, and they said, "Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

Great reformers and faithful preachers are always either too strict or too loose, too singular or too fashionable, for hardened self-indulgent sinners, and inveterate skeptical cavillers. But wisdom, and those who preach and practise her lessons, will, in time, be justified by all who are faithful to truth and duty, to conscience and God. The old objectors and complainers are silent in darkness, and the new ones are not the most beloved and honored people in the world; but John the Baptist is revered and honored through all the fairest portions of the earth, and Jesus is loved and adored past all thought, by all the good, and by all the great, both on earth and in heaven. "And He

shall shine as the sun in the firmament for ever and ever."

The Incurrigibles.

Jesus did not expect to be able to convert all. He believed that some were so blinded, that nothing could make them see; and that some were so hardened, that nothing could make them feel; He believed that there were people whom God had given up as incurable, and that their perdition was inevitable.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DOCTRINES OF JESUS.

WE would now notice the doctrines of Jesus in regard to God and His providence, with regard to immortality and retribution, and with regard to Himself and His work. On all those subjects the teachings of Christ are the grandest and worthiest, the most rational and beneficent, and, in many cases, the most cheering and consolatory imaginable. We not only regard them as better than the best representations of those subjects to be found in Pagan authors, but as the best that we can conceive.

And I may add, that those who are not tolerably well read in the literature of Pagan Mythology

and Pagan Philosophy, can have no idea of the debt of gratitude we owe to God for the Christian revelation. The Gospel of Christ does indeed bring men out of darkness into marvellous light, as well as from the power of Satan to God.

Doctrine on God.

Let us notice, first, the doctrine of Jesus with regard to God. With regard to what are called the natural attributes of God, Jesus builds on the foundation of Moses and the Prophets. He does not so much teach the omnipresence, the omniscience, the almightiness and eternity of God, as speak of them as matters already understood and received, and use them in the illustration and enforcement of His doctrine. It is God's GOODNESS, the greatness and boundlessness of His eternal LOVE, that Jesus undertakes specially to set forth, and this He exhibits in the most striking and touching light.

Jesus not only tells us that God is good, but that He is so good, that no one else is good at all compared with Him. When a certain man said to Him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I *do* that I may have eternal life?" Jesus said, "Why callest thou *Me* good? There is none good but one, that is, God." Jesus knew that some men *were* good, compared with other men; but He also knew, that the goodness of the best of men was so imperfect, that, compared with the goodness of

God, it was unworthy of the name. The stars are bright at night; but when the sun arises they are bright no more; their light is lost in the fuller light that makes our day.

Jesus sets forth the goodness of God by the most touching illustrations. In one case He speaks of God as a great good shepherd, and of mankind as His sheep. No sooner does the shepherd find that one of his sheep has gone astray, than he goes after it into the wilderness, in search of it. And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he reaches his home, he calls his neighbors, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost. And I say unto you," adds Jesus, "that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

Again, He compares Him to a great Creditor. Some of his debtors owe him ten thousand talents, and they are all insolvent. No matter; no sooner do they surrender, and ask for mercy, than he freely forgives them all.

The most touching and striking illustration which Jesus gives us of God's goodness, is that in which He sets forth God as a Father, the Father of all mankind. The parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the most affecting revelations of God in the whole Bible. A certain man had two sons, and the younger one, having obtained his share of the family property, left his father, "and took his jour-

ney into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living. And when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.

“And when he came to himself he said ; How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy servants.”

“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.” The son began his confession, as he had proposed, but brief as it was, before he had got through, the father cut it short. He was overpowered ; he could hear no more ; and he cried to his servants, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet ; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry ; for this my son was dead, and is alive again ; was lost and is found ; and they began to be merry.”

This parable will stand at the head of parables to the end of time. It can never grow old as long

as fathers and children exist. And it can never fail to move men's hearts. It is, next to Christ Himself, the grandest revelation of God in the universe. It is Gospel and law, and nature and revelation, and truth and tenderness, and God and man, all blended together, and all illumined with such a blaze of soft, sweet light, that our souls sink down in ecstasy, lost in tears, in love, in gratitude and joy.

Jesus teaches us that God is good to all,—that He causes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and on the unjust. He represents Him as seeking men's welfare from the beginning, sending them prophets for their instruction, and laboring, in the whole course of His Providence, to bring them to righteousness and peace. And last of all, He tells us, that He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Doctrine of Jesus in regard to Providence.

The doctrine of Jesus with regard to Providence is in keeping with the character He gives us of God. He represents God as the governor of all worlds, visible and invisible. Heaven, earth and hell,—the sun, the winds, the clouds,—men, governments and nations,—our bodies and our souls, are all under His control. Nothing can happen without Him; nothing can fail to happen if He

decrees that it shall be. Not a sparrow can fall to the ground, nor a hair of our heads perish, without His will. He feeds the fowls of the air; He clothes the grass of the field; He numbers the hairs of our head. He helps the good in their labors of love. When arraigned by their persecutors, He puts good thoughts and feelings into their hearts, and good words into their mouths, giving them a mouth and a wisdom that all their adversaries are unable to gainsay or resist.

He controls the purposes and plans of the wicked, and makes them serve His purposes without or against their will. Herod, and Judas, and Pontius Pilate, the unconscious instruments, and hosts of heavenly spirits, the willing agents of His love, alike contribute to the furtherance of His plans: while suns and atoms in the realms of nature, and saints and demons from the worlds unseen, are made to work together for our good. There is nothing, whether great or small, seen or unseen, living or dead, which does not move at His bidding, and contribute to the safety, the improvement, and the happiness of His people. He watches us by night and by day, He cares both for our bodies and our souls, and loves us and blesses us for evermore.

Jesus a Revelation of God.

But Jesus goes yet further in His doctrine with regard to God. He teaches that He is Him-

self a true representation and revelation of God, or, as Paul afterwards expressed it, the image and likeness of God,—God manifest in the flesh.

He told His disciples that they who had seen Him, had seen the Father,—that they who knew Him, knew the Father,—that He was in the Father and the Father in Him,—that the words He spoke were the Father's words, and that the works He wrought were the Father's works,—that He and the Father were one.

This is the most important and cheering, the most instructive and beneficent doctrine imaginable. It brings down the character of God to the most ordinary understanding. It does, in effect, make God visible, not only to our minds, but to our eyes.

Nothing can be more simple or intelligible than the character of Christ. There is nothing mixed, nothing doubtful about it: it is pure, unbounded, everlasting love. He was love itself,—love incarnate;—love living, walking, talking, laboring,—love suffering, weeping, dying for the salvation of the world. He did good to people of all classes, of all characters, of all countries, of all creeds; good of all kinds,—good to men's bodies and to men's souls;—and He never was weary in well-doing. Through reproaches and persecutions, through want and desertions, He still went on, and when at last He was nailed to the cross, He prayed with His dying breath, even in behalf of His murderers, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

And this is the image, the representation, the likeness of the infinite and eternal God. The spirit that made the worlds,—the spirit that rules through every department of this measureless universe,—the spirit that rules the ocean and guides the storm,—the spirit that governs the seasons, and determines our lot,—that directs the movements of every atom and of every element, and controls all events,—the spirit that rules in the dark regions of death and hell, is the spirit that lived in Christ,—the spirit that uttered those gracious words, that did those wondrous deeds, that shed those compassionate tears, that offered that dying prayer, and poured out that precious blood, for the salvation of the world.

I could always see power and grandeur in the universe; now I see everywhere tenderness and love. I could see skill in the formation of a bird, and in the painting of a flower; now the bird sings to me, and the sweet flower whispers to me, of eternal goodness. I see, as I used to see, wisdom, and majesty, and power, in the vast realms of nature; now I everywhere see mercy and compassion. God is love. The universe is love. Health and sickness, plenty and want, trials and crosses, hardships and perils, losses and bereavements, life and death, the world of sense and the worlds unseen, all are love. We live in love, we die in love, we rest and rejoice in love for evermore.

The first thing that strikes us in this doctrine is, its beauty and its tenderness. It is just the kind of doctrine which the heart of the best of men would wish to be true. It answers to the weakness and the wants of our nature ; to the longings and aspirations of our souls. It is full of consolation. It makes the universe complete. It makes man's life worth living. It makes the greatness, the vastness, the infinitude of our intellectual and affectional nature a blessing. It gives peace,—the peace that passes understanding. It gives joy,—the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. It opens our lips in the sight of sorrow, and enables us to give the sufferer consolation. It gives the universe a head. It gives it unity. It gives to man a Ruler. It gives to law a force. It gives to conscience power. It makes virtue duty; while it gives to it fresh grandeur and beauty. It exalts it in our eyes; and it endears it to our hearts. And it furnishes the all-perfect example. And it makes reasonable the inculcation of humility and charity, of forbearance and forgiveness. For why should we judge each other, if an infinite Father judges all? And why should we be impatient, cruel, or revengeful, if we are all in the hands of an All-wise, All-good, All-perfect Ruler? And it dignifies the work of beneficence. It makes us the allies and fellow-workers of the infinite. It makes us one with Him. In teaching the ignorant, in bringing back the erring, in strengthening the weak, in

reforming the vicious, in cheering the sad, in blessing the world, we are working as children in fellowship with their Father, and the pulses of our generous nature beat in harmony with the living, loving, all-pervading Spirit of the universe.

And while it brightens the present, it gilds the future. It makes a blessed immortality a natural certainty. If God our Father lives, then we His children shall live also. Death is abolished. Day dawns at last on the night of the grave. Earth is our birth-place and our nursery; death is the gateway to infinity, and there is our glorious and eternal home. Our work for ever is the joyous work of doing good. Our life is an eternal unfolding of our powers. The mysteries of universal nature open to our view, and in the confluence of the delights of knowledge and the transports of benevolence, our joy is full; our bliss is all complete.

This doctrine, in the form in which Jesus presents it, has hold of the hearts of nearly the whole population of Christendom. It has the strongest hold on the best. Even those who doubt it, doubt it with a sigh; and those who give it up, surrender it with regret.

And as they make the sacrifice the earth grows dark. And life grows sad. And nature wears the air of desolation. The music of the woods becomes less sweet. The beauty of the flowers becomes less charming. There creeps a dreary silence over land and sea. Existence loses more than half its

charms. The light of life burns dim. The past, the present, and the future all seem cheerless. The world is a vast orphan-house. Mankind are fatherless. Our dearest ones are desolate; and language has no word to comfort them. The lover sighs. The husband and the father weeps. The bravest stand aghast. The charm of life,—the un-mixed bliss of being, is no more.

And loss of faith in God is loss of regard to virtue. The ruder, coarser spirits, when they lose the thought of God, grow wild. They feel themselves quite lawless. Their will, their appetite, becomes their law. They lose their regard for truth. They lose their regard for justice. They lose their sense of honor. They lose their sense of right. They lose their regard for human life. They live for self, and sensualism is their heaven. They hate authority. They envy rulers. They covet change. They long for revolution. They sigh for anarchy. They would upturn the universal peace; destroy all unity on earth; pour the sweet milk of concord into hell; and leave the world a waste and howling wilderness.

On the Future Life.

His doctrine of a future life is as glorious as His doctrine with regard to God. He promises us life and fellowship with Himself in the kingdom of His Father. "My sheep hear my voice, and I

know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

"Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory."

He promises us homes also in the world of light. "In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

He promises us the society of the good and great of every age, of every nation, and of every world.

He promises us high and blessed employment, the ministry of love extended to the utmost stretch of our enlarged affections and extended powers. "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." To one faithful servant He promises the government of five cities; to another the government of ten; and to all a share of His own unspeakable blessedness; "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord." Thus the future life which Christ promises His people, is their present life of purity and love and beneficence raised to its highest state of perfection and blessedness, continued on for ever. His people never die, but live on, death being to them a transition only from a lower to a higher and happier life, in a better and happier world.

Future Punishment.

His doctrine with regard to the future doom of the wicked is not, perhaps, on every point, so clearly expressed. But He certainly gives no countenance to the notion that those who have been duly tried on earth, will ever be raised, either by almighty power, or by a process of painful discipline, to eternal blessedness. He assures us that the inexcusable unbeliever, and all who live to themselves, bestowing their care, and spending their means on selfish indulgence, while they leave the poor and needy, the ignorant and the vicious, to suffer unpitied and unhelped, shall go away into everlasting punishment.

What the exact nature of that punishment shall be is not so clearly revealed. A common representation is, that the finally incorrigible shall be cast into everlasting fire. Another is that they shall be cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Two things are certain,

1. That the language used by Christ represents the doom of the wicked as terribly awful ; and

2. That even if His words are all figurative, they must be just figures, and truly represent the dread reality.

3. A third thing is certain, namely, that it would be safer to mistake figurative language for literal, and even to represent future punishment as

more awful than it really is, supposing that possible, than to explain the awful language of Christ away, and encourage men to sin without remorse or fear. I therefore follow Jesus here also, and while I preach chiefly, as He did, in the winning way, I speak at times on the doom of the ungodly, and feel bound to speak in the strain employed by Him.

And we declare freely, that we have no misgivings as to the propriety of punishing men when they are really wicked. We should be sorry if hypocrites, cheats and swindlers—if faithless husbands, and cruel fathers, and heartless neighbors,—if unnatural children, treacherous friends, and heartless persecutors,—if fornicators, seducers and adulterers,—if corrupt judges, and perjured witnesses, and bribed traitors to their God and their country were not punished. We like mercy; but there is a place in the universe for justice too; and on the impenitent and incorrigible let justice be done. It is right, and we believe it is necessary, that both in time and in eternity, ‘whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.’

Jesus—What He said of Himself.

Among the things which Jesus said of Himself, the following are some of the principal :

He declared Himself to be the CHRIST or the MESSIAH. The first of these words is Greek, and the other Hebrew, for THE ANOINTED.

Anointing was used in setting people apart to special offices or works. The work to which Jesus was anointed or set apart He Himself describes in a discourse recorded by Luke in which He applies to Himself the following words from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel, or good tidings, to the poor, and hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to restore sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," or the year of Jubilee,—the year of universal emancipation, of forgiveness of debts, and of the restoration of inheritances to their original owners.

On another occasion He says, "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Here Jesus seems to teach that He is to the spiritual world, what the sun is to the natural one, which not only gives light, revealing objects, but kindles life; whose light gives life. The light *I* give, says Jesus, is the light of life; the light that kindles love; love to God, love to man, which is the highest life, and which prompts to the noblest deeds, of which mankind are capable.

In another passage Jesus says, "I am come that ye might have life—the life of holy, active love—and that ye might have it more abundantly." And again He says, "God sent His Son not to

condemn the world ; but that the world through Him might be saved ;" assuring us, that if any are condemned, the reason is, that they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

He also speaks of Himself as a king, but adds, that His kingdom is not of this world,—that it is a spiritual kingdom—the kingdom of heaven, governed by truth and love, and warring only against moral and spiritual evil.

To the same purport, but in more literal words, Jesus says, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth. And My teaching is the truth ; and every child or lover of truth, heareth my voice."

He speaks of bad people as slaves of sin, and represents Himself as the Great Emancipator, and says to His hearers, "If ye believe in Me, and continue in My word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free ;" free from bad passions, free from bad habits, free from bad tastes. "For if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

At other times He speaks of sin as filth or pollution, and of His truth as purifying or sanctifying. Hence His prayer to His Father, "Sanctify them through Thy truth ; Thy word is truth ;" and hence too the following words, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you."

In another place He says, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." And He compares Himself to a shepherd, striving to bring the whole scattered flock of humanity into His pasture and fold.

He also compares Himself to a physician, and speaks of His work as that of curing the moral and spiritual diseases of mankind.

In another place He says, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,—not to be served, but to serve,—and to give His life a ransom for many."

Here He speaks of His DEATH as the grand means of our redemption. He speaks of His death as the means of our salvation in several other passages. "Except a grain of wheat fall to the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth more fruit." "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." "I am the living bread—and the bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The Apostles also lay great stress on this point. Paul tells us that Jesus "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good

works ;" that 'He who knew no sin, was made a sin-offering for us, that we might be made a righteous people unto God through Him.' Peter says, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, but with the precious blood of Christ;" and he adds that Jesus "died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God."

Paul speaks of Christ's death as the means not only of our reconciliation to God, but of the reconciliation of men to men.

ECCE HOMO makes the redeeming efficiency of Christ's death to consist in this, that it was the most perfect example of disinterested, self-sacrificing love for mankind. This overpowering display of love won men's hearts to Him, and through Him to all mankind, and thus led them, not only to renounce all sin, but to consecrate themselves to a life of beneficence to the bodies and souls of men. And there is no doubt but that the death of Christ has great force, when viewed even in this, its lowest light.

But Jesus was not only a man, exhibiting the most perfect self-sacrificing human generosity; He was incarnate Deity, exhibiting the character of God, and, as His visible representative, giving the most amazing demonstration of His boundless love. His exhibition of God's goodness, not only in His beneficent miracles, and in the whole course of His unparalleled life and labors, but in His sufferings

and death, make such a display of the infinite love of God, as cannot fail, when duly contemplated, to melt, and purify, and remould man's heart, and make it wholly divine. Hence, the Apostle says, "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory, or the goodness of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord." And hence the words of the Apostle in another place, "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Whatever therefore may be the fate of men's theories on this subject, the fact is certain, that the death of Christ is the grand means of our redemption and salvation. And it is also certain, that enough is clearly revealed on this subject, to make it manifest, that there was in Christ's death a natural tendency to redeem and save the souls of men.

There are many other passages in which Jesus speaks of Himself and His errand into the world, but the sum of all appears to be this, that He came to enlighten, to redeem and to save mankind,—to make men wise, and good, and happy, in the highest degree,—to bring them into favor and fellowship with God, and to raise them to the highest dignity and glory of which their nature is capable, both in time and in eternity.

And to this most glorious end Jesus devoted Himself without reserve, and as a matter of fact, He has become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JESUS ON RICHES AND POVERTY.

THERE are some of Christ's doctrines which have not as yet been able to make their way into many men's heads or hearts. They have heard of them, but not understood them. They have looked at them sometimes; but, as if their eyes were holden, they have not seen them. The doctrines have been shining for ages in the darkness, and are shining still; but, as a rule, the darkness comprehendeth them not. It would be a happy thing if professing Christians could come so far up from the thick mists of the lower grades of the spiritual life, as to be able to see this light, and receive it into their souls, and permit it to influence their lives.

Among the doctrines to which we refer are the following:

1. That a man's life or happiness consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth—that a man may be rich, and yet miserable; that he may be poor, and yet happy.

2. That riches are very dangerous—that they are temptations and snares—that they are deceitful, cheating and disappointing men—that they make it hard, very hard, all but impossible, for a man to be good, or to enter into the kingdom of heaven—that poverty is better than riches—that poverty tells men the truth—that it frees men from hurtful delusions, and makes it easier for them to be good, easier for them to enter into the kingdom of heaven—that men should not desire to be rich, or be afraid to be poor—that men should not be anxious about food and raiment, but mind their duty and trust in God—that men should not lay up for themselves treasures on earth as a security against want,—that they should not trust in riches,—that it is nevertheless impossible for us to help trusting in them, if we lay them up for ourselves,—that where our riches are, our hearts, our trust, will be,—that riches, therefore, if they fall to a man's lot, should be regarded with apprehension, with fear,—that they should be used in doing good,—that the rich should be rich in good works, rich towards God,—that we should, by employing our riches in beneficence, send them to heaven, to be kept for us there by God,—that there are cases in which it may be needful for men to sell their property, to enable them to serve the needy souls and bodies of men the more effectually, and to secure their own salvation,—that riches are not necessary to the usefulness of a church,—that poor men and poor women may

conquer all the evil powers of earth and hell, and change the course and character of mighty nations—that Christians should be content with food and raiment,—that they should not pray or wish for more than their daily bread,—that if Christians are Christians indeed, their food and raiment will be given them, and that the one great object for which they should pray and labor should be, the prosperity of God's kingdom, that all mankind may become its subjects, and do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven.

These doctrines Christ preached by His life as well as by His words. As we have seen, He was Himself poor, the poorest of the poor. He *chose* to be poor; He refused to be rich. His followers were poor. The early churches were poor. Paul was poor. And Paul talks as strangely about poverty and riches as Jesus Himself. Both in doctrine and conduct, on this subject, he and Jesus were one.

Jesus taught that we ought not to be troubled when we are wronged; that we should take our losses meekly, and bear them quietly; that we should not resist evil, or revenge wrongs, but return good for evil, and overcome evil with good. He teaches that we should not be alarmed or troubled at slander or persecution; that those who are reproached and persecuted for righteousness' sake are blessed, and should rejoice and be exceeding glad.

He teaches that worldly sorrow is better than worldly mirth,—that those who mourn are in a happier state than those who laugh ; that what the flesh most desires is death to the soul, and that what the flesh most dreads is life and joy to it,—that when all things tempt us to ease and self-indulgence, we are on the brink of ruin,—and that when all things check our selfish indulgence, and rouse us to holy action, God is giving us the strongest proofs of His love.

I leave these doctrines as Jesus left them, to speak for themselves. I may however say, that I have thought them well over,—that I have submitted them to the test of experience,—that I have read what Wesley, and Baxter, and Law and many good Catholics, and the best of Pagan moralists have said on those subjects, and that the result is a conviction, that the doctrines are true, and of great importance. I am satisfied that the teachings of Christ on this, as on other subjects, are the true, the only true philosophy, and that everything opposed to them is of the world, the flesh and the devil. But it is not every man, I fear, that can receive these sayings just now. May the Lord,

“Increase our faith, confirm our hope,
And perfect us in love.”

I make no attempt to force my views on this subject on others. I dictate to no one. I judge no one. I simply give you my convictions. Still, the

subject is worthy of consideration. Perhaps you may discover, if you inquire carefully, that there is more true wisdom, and a higher philosophy in the teachings of Jesus on this point, than you have supposed. Perhaps you may find Him opening to you the way to a higher, nobler, and happier life, than you have hitherto lived. Perhaps you may discover that those sayings of Jesus which many have regarded as unintelligible, or unaccountable, are words of truth and soberness, and are full of the richest lessons which the wisdom and goodness of God have ever vouchsafed to man.

Let me add, before I pass from this subject, a few broken hints, to help the thoughts of those who may wish to understand the subject.

Which is the noblest life? a life of selfish ease, and luxury; or a busy life of trade with a view to an increase of riches; or a life of beneficence,—a life devoted to the improvement and happiness of mankind?

What is the character which men admire and praise most? Is it the character of Jacob, ever toiling to increase his wealth, without any great or generous deed on record to his credit? or the character of Job, who was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame,—who was a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow,—who shared His bread with the hungry, and gave to the naked a covering?

We cannot indulge our appetites freely in eating and drinking, without injuring our health, bringing on ourselves grievous pains, unfitting ourselves for the duties of life, and exposing ourselves to an untimely death. Let children have their way with regard to sweet-meats, and they will kill themselves before they are half grown. Let men give their appetites their own way, and their lives will come to a speedy end, and not be worth much during the few short years they may last.

Men must either live on little or live to little purpose. If they spend much on themselves, they must spend themselves as well. It costs but little to be happy ; it is misery that is so expensive. Poverty, or something but very little above poverty, can buy comfort ; it is disease and pain and nervous horrors that require ten thousand or a hundred thousand a year.

As a matter of fact, great wealth does not bring life, but death ; it does not procure happiness, but misery. And poverty does not bring death, but life ; nor does it cause misery, but happiness. Poverty, if it be not so extreme as to render it impossible for a man to obtain a supply of homely food and decent raiment, tends to make a man good and happy. It tends to keep him in good health and good spirits. It gives him sweet sound sleep. It keeps him from a world of cares. It makes the burdens of life sit light on his soul. Hunger makes sweet his frugal meal. Thirst

makes delicious his cup of cold water. Labor helps his digestion, assists the healthful action of all his organs, and makes sweet and refreshing his nightly rest.

Poor men do not become happy when they become rich. They often become miserable. They find great pleasure in the change at first, but if they do not keep to a plain and temperate way of life, and spend their money in doing good, the pleasure of the change soon passes away, and misery takes its place.

A rich man may be self-indulgent: then he goes down both in character and enjoyment, and sinks before long into an untimely grave. Or he may give himself heartily to business. Then, if he succeeds, and is temperate, he enjoys a considerable amount of pleasure of a third rate quality, but nothing deserving the name of happiness. If he fails in business, then, if he has a conscience, and natural affections, and ordinary human feelings, he is very miserable. If he is without conscience, natural affection, and human feeling, he is lost; he is dead to all that is valuable in life; and doomed to all that is horrible in death. If he follows business in moderation, and besides being temperate, gives himself to wholesome reading and study, he may enjoy a considerable amount of pleasure of a *second* rate quality; but nothing like happiness in its higher forms. If he is covetous, greedy of gain, and follows bad businesses, or carries on good

ones on bad principles, he is worse than dead,—he lives a demon's life, and he will have a demon's lot. He will have pleasure of a certain kind, as demons have, and as human murderers have ; but it will be at a fearful remove from anything deserving the name of happiness.

If when he becomes rich, he keeps, like Wesley, to his frugal, homely way of living, eating and drinking for health and vigor, and spends his time and money in doing good, reading good books, and seeking for useful knowledge,—if he be a thoroughly good man, coming as near to Christ as possible in his spirit and way of life, he will be happy,—as happy as he was when poor.

If he be as Christlike in wealth as he was in poverty, he may be happier ; for it is a greater thing to be good in wealth, than in poverty ; and a man may perhaps do more good in wealth, if he be very good, than he might in poverty. But in every case, a man's happiness consists in his goodness, and not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

Can any Christian believe that Jesus chose a state in which He could not be supremely happy and useful ; or that He recommended such a state to others ? Can any intelligent, considerate Christian doubt the truth of His plain, out-spoken words ; “Blessed are ye poor : Wo unto you that are rich.”

Wesley tells us that he never had fifteen min-

utes low spirits in fifty years. His manner of living did not invite low spirits ; and if they came uninvited, it gave them no encouragement to stay. It is luxury that invites low spirits, and that makes them, when they come, your constant guests. It is selfish, sensual pleasure that ruins men, both body and soul, both for time and eternity.

We know that what we are saying is true. We know the world's estimate of wealth and poverty, of high living and low living, to be false. We know that worldlings,—worldlings in the Church, and worldlings out of the Church,—spend the greater part of their money for that which is not bread, and the greater part of their labor for that which satisfieth not. We know that ten cents would often procure them a better feast than that for which they give a hundred dollars. We know, in short, that the doctrine of Jesus on riches and poverty is true, and that the philosophy which laughs at it is false. We know that the philosophy that sets itself against Jesus is folly and madness. We know it by experience. We know it by a most extensive and keen-eyed observation. We know it from the testimony of such men as Baxter and Penn, of Wesley and Fletcher, and of other good men of enlarged experience and observation. We know it from the testimony of the best, the greatest, and the most experienced minds of all nations and of all ages, including the ablest and the worthiest of the ancient philosophers of

Greece and Rome. We know it from our acquaintance with the laws of human nature,—the laws of life, of health, and of enjoyment. We know it from history. We know it from the united testimony of good and bad men,—of rich and poor men,—of men who have been rich and become poor,—of men who have been poor, and become rich. We know it from the testimony of fallen greatness, and from the testimony of greatness not fallen.

We know that the doctrine of Jesus on this subject is true; and we know it to be of the utmost importance that it should be studied and understood; and that it should be believed and reduced to practice.

The weakness of the Church, the power of the world, the prevalence of infidelity, the irreligion of the working-classes, are no mysteries. Christianity has not lost its power; but its professed friends allow its lessons to slumber. Infidelity is not too much for Christianity, but the thing called Christianity, which is opposed to infidelity, is not always the Christianity of Christ. What is the worth of Christianity when the plain, practical teachings of Christ, and the story of His self-denying and exemplary life are left out? It is the Gospel, the Christianity of Jesus, that is to save the world. Merciful God, reveal to us our errors; make plain to us Thy truth. Let us not stand in a false position either towards Thee or towards our fellow-

men. Deliver us, O Father, from the undue influence of our selfish and sensual appetites and passions. Help us to do justice to the teachings of Thy Son. Let us not turn aside from His words, or attempt to hide from ourselves their meaning. May we enter into Christ's spirit, that we may enter into His views. May we become one with Him in His plans and labors, and, consecrating ourselves and all we have to His cause, may we see religion prosper, and the nations hastening to place themselves under His blessed rule.

CHAPTER XXX.

JESUS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS.

JESUS paid little attention to opinions ; it was the heart, the affections, the disposition, that He regarded most. If men had faith in Him and loved Him, that was enough. He left them free to think, and gave them time to learn, desirous only that they should show their attachment and fidelity to Him by their love to one another.

John Wesley imitated Jesus in this very closely. He required no confession of opinions from those who offered themselves for admission into his societies. What he required was a desire to obtain the salvation of their souls, showing itself by lead-

ing them to cease to do evil, and to learn to do well, and by the use of all the means of religious improvement. He did not trouble himself much even about the opinions of his preachers. If they believed in God and Christ and the great all-powerful principles of living Christianity, and showed a disposition and determination to labor only for the conversion of sinners, and for growing holiness and Christian zeal and labors in the members and officers of the church, he was satisfied. He would not allow preachers to use the influence which a place among his ministers gave them, to harass the people's minds with mischievous disputes, or to spend their time in propagating blasphemous or antinomian doctrines; and he was right. But if they showed a supreme regard to plain practical Christianity, and a living zeal for inward and outward holiness, he asked no more.

He expressed the kindest feelings, and showed the greatest liberality towards Church-men, Moravians, Presbyterians and Quakers. And if he did not fraternize with many of the Independents, it was because they stood aloof, as if unwilling to fraternize with him. He gave his hand to all who would give their hands to him.

It would be well if all Christians and Christian ministers would make more of living faith in God, and Christ, and eternal things, and of holy, fervid, self-sacrificing love, and zealous labors for the salvation of the world, and less of theological or

metaphysical theories. There is enough in the plain practical teachings of Christ and His Apostles, the gold, the silver, and the precious stones of divine truth, to fill bigger hearts than many have ; so that there is no need to cram into them loads of wood, hay and stubble. Those who set themselves to master the teachings of Christ will find they have work enough, without attempting to master the monstrous fictions of idle, metaphysical dreamers, and the vain and often horrible questions of a set of mischievous and ungodly wranglers.

And what a happy life it is to feast on the living bread and to drink of the living water that Jesus deals out so freely and plenteously, compared with licking up the dust with the serpent, or choking ourselves with the husks that the swine should eat.

Religion is love ; and it is faith in God and Christ and simple Gospel truth that kindles this love and keeps it burning. Let us get our souls filled with it, and we shall then both be happy and useful ourselves, and help to make all around us happy and useful.

Lord, that we may learn of Thee,
Give us true simplicity ;
Wean our souls and keep them low,
Willing Thee alone to know.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OTHER DOCTRINES OF JESUS.

AMONG other rational and practical doctrines of Christ recorded in the Gospels, are the following:

1. That the acceptableness of divine worship does not depend on the *place* in which it is offered, or on the form in which it is presented, but on its sincerity, its heartiness, and its truth,—that the worship of a loving, trusting, obedient soul is always acceptable to God. This is a great peculiarity of Christianity, and a most important one.

2. That we ought always to labor for reconciliation and friendship with our brethren on earth, before we enter on acts of worship which imply fellowship and friendship with our Father in heaven.

3. That we must not ask for pardon of our sins from God, till we are prepared to pardon those who in penitence seek forgiveness from us. That in spirit and meaning, part of our prayer to God should always be, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

4. That God answers the prayers of His loving and obedient children. 'Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find.' 'If ye abide in Me, and My word abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you!' 'I have chosen you that you should be useful, and that whatsoever

ye ask the Father in my name, He may give it you.'

5. That God likes good souls to pray in concert, and that when two or three of His loving children join together in a request, He is especially disposed to grant it.

6. That nevertheless God hears His loving obedient ones when they pray alone, in their closets, and rewards them openly.

7. That prayer and other forms of worship are not to be esteemed above acts of mercy and charity,—that, in truth, mercy is before and above sacrifice:—that prayer and praise are the *means* of religion and holiness, but that love and beneficence are religion and holiness themselves.

8. That the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, and that it must therefore be so employed as to be rendered most conducive to man's welfare,—that the proper way to spend it is in doing good to man, both temporal and spiritual, and in relieving the distresses even of the lower animals.

9. That goodness is true greatness,—that humble, condescending, generous, self-sacrificing men and women, are the greatest people on earth,—that the voluntary servant is greater than the imperious master,—that those who stoop to lift up their fallen or humbler brethren and sisters, and who prefer labor and sacrifices for the helpless and the needy, to indulgence in ease and selfish pleasure,

are greater people in the eyes of God, are nobler and more honorable in the estimation of all the good spirits of heaven, than all the selfish, ambitious and vain-glorious kings and queens, princes and aristocrats on the face of the earth.

10. That the good we do to Christ's followers, and even the good we do to all for whom He shed His blood, He takes as done to Himself, and will acknowledge it as a personal favor, and reward it as such at the last day.

11. That it is not the amount of service rendered, or good done to His people that Christ takes specially into account, but the heartiness of the love and devotion with which it is done: and that whosoever shall give to one of His disciples a cup of cold water only because he is one of His disciples, shall have his reward.

12. That it is not the greatness of the good deed in any case that determines the measure of the reward, but the greatness of the goodness, the sincerity and fervor of the affection, from which it flows; and that Mary's box of ointment, and the two mites of the poor widow, may count more in the estimation of God and Christ, than millions of dollars, or princely estates, bestowed by the rich: that there are no false measures, or deceitful balances in heaven.

13. That nothing is required of any one by God, either in the way of knowledge, faith, or godly action, beyond the person's powers and op-

portunities,—that if men go into God's vineyard when they are told to do so, however late in the day it may be, and work well while they are there, though it be but for a single hour, they will receive the same reward as those who entered the vineyard in the morning, and worked all day ;—that as those who go in as soon as they have a chance, and work as long as they can, show as good a disposition to serve and please their employer as any others can do, they shall have as full a recompense as any. If they remain outside the vineyard, not from an unwillingness to enter earlier and bear the burden and heat of the day, but because no man offered to hire them sooner, why should they not receive a full day's wages, if the owner of the vineyard is rich and humane enough to give them ?

14. That God gives talents or means of usefulness to men according to their ability to make a proper use of them : that we have all therefore as much money and influence as we have the ability to use : that we must not therefore say, what a great deal more good we could do if we had more means ; but do the most we can with what we have,—that *more* means, with our present habits, tastes, and spirit would probably make us less useful instead of more so.

15. That if we use well our present powers and opportunities, God will increase them, making two talents into four, and five into ten or eleven.

16. That those who have but *one* talent are expected to use it properly,—that no one is allowed to let his gifts lie idle, however limited they may be,—that *one* talent therefore unemployed brings as sure a punishment as two or five ; and that one talent rightly employed brings as sure a recompense.

17. That a man who has two or five talents is required to use them all. He is not permitted to bury one, or four, and improve the rest : he must bury none, if he would receive the smile and commendation of his master.

18. That all who use well the talents entrusted to them, whether they be few or many, will receive commendation and reward. The master will say to all such, Well done, good and faithful servants ; enter ye into the joy of your Lord.

19. That it is not necessary for men to use their money in the slave trade, or in building drinking holes, gambling hells, theatres, or brothels ; or in corrupting voters, judges or legislators ; or in seducing unsuspecting creatures from the paths of innocence, in order to secure them a place in outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth,—that all they need to do to secure that fearful doom is, to let their money lie useless, or to spend it on themselves and their families in wastefulness, or show, or self-indulgence. And that it is not necessary that a minister, or a scholar, or a genius should employ his powers in writing bad

books, or preaching error or licentiousness, to procure a place in the great prison-house of ruined souls. All that is required is, that he should live at ease, permit his gifts to lie unemployed, or employ them at random, or for his own pleasure or profit only, to secure for himself as dark a den, or as hot an oven, as the regions of darkness can supply.

20. That Christ demands nothing unreasonable of any one,—that His yoke is easy, and His burden light, when people get them fairly fitted on, or get the necks and backs of their souls fairly fitted to them.

21. That meekness and lowliness are the way to rest of soul, and pride and anger the way to eternal trouble.

22. That Jesus gives His disciples peace—not as the world giveth gives He unto them, but something infinitely better and infinitely more lasting.

23. That Jesus gives His followers joy, and that if they will do as He bids them, their joy will be full. The bestowment of **FULNESS OF JOY** is repeatedly spoken of by Jesus as the end of His labors and sufferings on our account. This fulness of joy is attainable. Many have enjoyed it in ages past. Many enjoy it now. Some poor creatures that had given up all hopes of ever being happy again enjoy it at this hour. One man that had come to look on life as a worthless thing, and on the universe as a mass of horrors,

has now as much happiness as he cares to ask for or desires to enjoy. No one promises so much as Jesus, and no one fulfils his promises so well. "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might be in you, and that your joy might be full."

Then Jesus Himself had great joy. The man of sorrows was not an unhappy man. There met in Him a fulness of sorrow and a fulness of joy. This kind of apparent contradictions are not always untrue.

24. Jesus gives His followers *life*,—spiritual life, the life of love,—of love to God, love to Himself, and love to all mankind—a life that lives within, but works without, spending its force in doing good. This is the life of God, the life of heaven, the highest and the happiest life a man or an angel can live.

25. Jesus came on purpose that we might have life of this kind, and that, if any had a little of it already, they might have it more abundantly.

26. This kind of life raises man to a higher sphere, makes him a new kind of creature, gives him a higher kind of pleasures, fits him for a nobler kind of employment, and it would, if it were universally diffused, produce a new kind of world, with a new kind of history, and a new kind of portion. A race of men with this kind of life would turn the earth into a paradise.

27. There is more in Jesus and His religion than most people imagine. If ever the people of the

earth wake up, and come to see things as they really are, there will be such a weeping and such a lamentation as never were heard or seen on earth before. The people will be broken-hearted to think that they have so under-estimated the goodness of God, and so undervalued the character, the work, and the religion of Christ. If people saw their conduct, or we may say their indifference towards Jesus in its true light, they would wail in wildest agony, and feel a weight of grief and self-reproach unbearable. But this their grief and wailing, their weeping and lamentation, would soon give place to joy, fulness of joy, a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

If people were asleep or dead, they could hardly be more unconscious of their worldly affairs, than people generally are now of the wonderful realities connected with God, and Christ, and Christianity. It is sad. It distresses, it amazes me, to think that I could ever have been blind or indifferent to these wonderful things; but infidelity is madness, and worldliness is death. Thank God that I have been permitted to experience so great, so blessed a change.

“Light of the world, illumine all.”

28. Our lower animal life is a very good foundation for a higher intellectual worldly life; and this higher intellectual worldly life is a good foundation for the still higher life, the life of Christ, the life of God.

29. That God deals with us as we deal with each other,—that with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again,—that if we are generous to men, God will be generous to us,—that if we are unfeeling towards others, God will be severe towards us,—that if we give freely, it will be given to us again, good measure, pressed down, heaped up, running over,—that with what judgment we judge, we shall be judged,—that everything in our conduct towards our fellow-men brings its likeness or equivalent in reward or punishment, both in this world and in the world to come—that if we forgive, we shall be forgiven,—that if we do *not* forgive, we shall not be forgiven,—and that if we have got forgiven, our pardon will be taken back if we refuse to forgive our brethren,—that they who take the sword shall perish with the sword, while the meek, the non-resisting, non-resenting, shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

If this be true, we may qualify ourselves to tell our own fortunes, by considering carefully our spirit and conduct towards our fellow-men. We may foretell the amount of love men will feel towards us, from the amount we show towards them; and the amount they will do for us in time of need, from the amount we do for them in their necessities. A farmer knows what will come up in a certain field, from what he sows: if he sows wheat, he knows the crop will be wheat; if he

were to sow nettles, he would know that the crop would be nettles. According to Christ, all our words and deeds are seeds, and will produce their like, and as we sow we shall reap.

My wish is to reap a crop of blessings. Then I will sow blessings. I have not always sown the best seed in the past, nor have I reaped in all cases the most agreeable harvest. I will, by God's help, do better in days to come, that I may rejoice in happier results.

30. The representation Jesus gives us of the spirit or disposition of heavenly society, is beautiful and glorious to the last degree. He represents the inhabitants of heaven as taking the greatest interest in the welfare of mankind, and as rejoicing in a general jubilee when a sinner, even of the lowest grade on earth, returns to God.

31. You might almost imagine from the way in which Christ speaks on such subjects, that God, instead of being a metaphysical abstraction, is very much like a good and tender-hearted man, and that He really finds an increase of joy in the salvation and increased happiness of His creatures. And whether it be theological to do so or not, I really feel more inclined to cherish the warm, and loving, and sympathetic words of Jesus, than the thin, cold, hungry abstractions of metaphysical moonshine.

32. That while we labor to diffuse religious truth and holy influences by words or books, we should especially endeavor to do so by a good ex-

ample. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

33. That men do not glorify God by bearing little fruit, even though it be good. "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear *much* fruit: so shall ye be My disciples." This last phrase seems to intimate that if we do *not* bear much fruit, when we are able to do so, we cannot be Christ's disciples. Hence we are told that 'every branch that beareth fruit, the Father purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit.' The end of all God does is to make us abound in useful labors.

34. That while much shall be required from those to whom much is given, but little will be expected from those to whom only little is given,—that the man who makes a right use of his one talent, or two talents, will receive as hearty a welcome into the joy of his Lord, as he who makes a proper use of his five talents,—that it is not the amount done, or the sum given, but the good disposition that secures the approval of God,—that two mites given by a poor widow may count more than ten thousand dollars given by a rich man,—and that if a woman does what she can, though the deed itself may have no particular apparent utility, it shall not only meet with a gracious acceptance, but receive the highest commendation and the greatest reward.

35. That the punishment of men will be propor-

tioned to their guilt,—that no one will be punished for the fault of another,—that no one will suffer beyond his ill-desert,—that while those who do things worthy of many stripes shall receive many, those who do things worthy only of few stripes, shall receive but few.

36. Though there are cases in which doubt may originate in innocent causes, as in the case of John the Baptist, and of the disciple Thomas ; yet, as a rule, infidelity is the result of a bad heart and a wicked life. With regard to many, the true explanation of their unbelief is that given by Jesus : “ They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.”

And men who become doubters through other causes than a vicious disposition or a wicked life, will not continue doubters long, if they hold fast their integrity. If they sink into utter unbelief, you are excusable in concluding that they first sank into sin. There is no sympathy, no harmony, no consistency, and there can be no long companionship between virtue and infidelity. Let no fair words, or false appearances, or unwise charity persuade you to the contrary. The fairest-seeming and most reputable infidel is unsound in places. You are in very little danger of erring, in believing the most gracious-looking, fair-dealing, pleasant-talking man to be immoral, if he be of the long-standing, thoroughly-seasoned class of unbelievers.

37. A good life leads to belief, not only in God,

but in Christ. "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of my doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

If therefore the unbeliever does not come to know the doctrine of Jesus to be of God, you may conclude that he is not doing God's will,—that he is not governed by a regard to what is right,—that he is living to please himself which is, in truth, the essence and the sum of all evil. There is no uncharitableness in thus judging. It is a judgment according to truth, and charity rejoiceth in the truth, and truth will still be found on the side of charity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JESUS AS A KING.

JESUS was a king. He was foretold as a king by the Jewish prophets, and was looked for as a king by the Jewish people. And Jesus, soon after His appearance in public, announced Himself as a king; as the king for which the nation was looking. But His own idea of His kingship, and the ideas entertained of it by His countrymen, were very different.

The Jews expected a king of the ordinary kind,

only much better, and much more powerful and prosperous. They expected that the ruler they were looking for, would place Himself on the throne of David, deliver them from the hated yoke of the Romans, and rapidly extend His dominion over all the earth. They supposed that they would be the head of the new kingdom, and that the rest of the nations would be tributaries to them, and pour into their treasuries the riches of the world. They looked for glorious times.

And all these things they looked for, not as the result of a new heart and a godly life, but in virtue of their descent from Abraham. They expected perhaps that they would be required to pay the ordinary kind of respect to the laws of Moses, but had no idea that personal individual holiness would be necessary to a share in the blessings of the New Kingdom. It was a political revolution, a worldly kingdom, and great temporal prosperity that they were looking for. Between these expectations of the people, and the thoughts and plans of Jesus, there was a difference as great as that between earth and heaven.

The kingdom contemplated by Jesus, was a spiritual and a heavenly one. His plan was, not to interfere with the governments already in existence, or to place Himself at the head of any existing party or nation, but to form an entirely new community, selecting His own subjects, appointing His own officers, making His own laws, and con-

ducting His own government, independent of all the kingdoms of the earth. His object was to enlighten and regenerate men, then to re-organize them, and form them into a vast spiritual empire, and so establish the kingdom of God over all the earth.

He began by calling around Him a number of those who had faith in Him,—who were convinced that He was indeed from God, and who were prepared to place themselves entirely at His disposal; and these formed the germ of His new society. He kept them near Him, teaching them His doctrine, and endeavoring to make plain to them the true nature of His great work. This was no easy task; for their minds, like the minds of their countrymen generally, were full of dreams of political revolutions, and of worldly wealth and glory. Though convinced that Jesus was the promised king and Saviour, and though resolved to follow His leadings, they were still expecting an earthly kingdom, and were looking for high places in its administration. The kingdom of which Jesus Himself was thinking was something of which no being on earth but Himself had as yet formed the least conception; and to get the old worldly selfish ideas out of the disciples' minds, and put such new and strange, such lofty and spiritual ones in their place, was all but impossible. Still He labored on, exercising wonderful patience, and treating His disciples with the ut-

most tenderness, and His labors were at length successful.

The wish of Jesus was to fit His disciples to go out as His ambassadors, and call the people of the earth to join His standard; and hopeless as the effort seemed at first, and for a long time afterwards, it was crowned at last with success. But the period from their call by Jesus, to their proper understanding of His principles and plans, was one of great trial to the disciples. They were traveling entirely in the dark. They had faith, but no sight. It was a world of awful uncertainty that lay before them; but they moved on at the bidding of their Heavenly guide. They saw, they felt, they were assured that their master was no ordinary being,—that He was, to say the least, a special favorite of God; and they felt that they must be safe in His hands.

The darkness is now past: Time has made all things plain: but we can see what a strength of faith, and what an amount of truth and courage were necessary, to carry the disciples of Jesus safely through their great and long-continued perplexities and uncertainties. They had no idea, while following Jesus from place to place, what strange events awaited them; what astonishing changes were to take place in their thoughts, their feelings, and their way of life; what a glorious work, what a strange lot, and what a blessed recompense lay before them; and what a place their labors and

their names would fill in the coming history of the world. Who now would not be willing to walk through such a night, with such a guide, to such a glorious day!

There are several matters of great interest connected with the Kingdom of Christ, on which we should like to dwell at some length, but want of space compels us to be very brief. Several writers have treated this subject, of late, at considerable length, and with great ability, and we cannot do better, perhaps, than to give a quotation from the views of one of them.

“Jesus,”—says one of those writers,—“founded the greatest and the most beneficent empire the world has ever seen, and He did so without assistance from any of those sources on which founders of empires generally have been dependent for their success.

“It is a great advantage to a man in forming a state, if the people whom he proposes to organize have descended from one stock, and are drawn to each other by family affections, sameness of language and near neighborhood. It will further aid him in his work if he can promise the people, as the result of their organization, the advantages of mutual protection, the punishment of their enemies, the increase of their wealth, and the extension of their power by conquest. Men have also been aided in raising themselves to dominion by powerful allies, and in no case have they hesitated to resort to force and strategy.

“Christ looked for aid to none of these advantages. He employed no force. He took no notice of family ties. He asked no help from reigning powers, or from political or religious parties. He held out no prospect of gain or conquest; of mutual protection, or punishment of adversaries. He based His government on the consent of His subjects. The bond of union was attachment and devotion to Himself, and love to one another. He granted no special privileges to the Jews; He denied no privilege to the Gentiles. He flattered no class, He pandered to no prejudice, He used no guile. He advised those who were preparing to embark in His cause to count the cost, spoke of reproach and persecution as nigh at hand, and warned them that none would be accepted and approved by Him who were not willing to be governed in all things by His will, and prepared to risk their all, and even to sacrifice their lives for His cause.

“And yet He succeeded. He formed a kingdom in which men of various and hostile races, of different languages, of conflicting interests, and of all diversities of class and complexion were united as one family. And it spread over an extent of country vaster than was covered by the greatest empires; and it remains and grows to this hour.”

“When we contemplate this scheme of Christ,” says our author, “three things strike us with astonishment. First, its prodigious originality. What

other man has had the courage or elevation of mind to say: 'I will build up a state by the mere force of my will, without help from the kings of the world, without taking advantage of any of the secondary causes which unite men together, such as unity of interest or speech, or blood-relationship. I will make laws for My state which shall never be repealed, and I will defy all the powers of destruction that are at work in the world to destroy what I build.'

"We are astonished, secondly, at the calm confidence with which the scheme was carried out. He never deviated from His plan, though persistence in His course lost Him the favor of His countrymen, bewildered at times His most attached followers, and brought Him at last to the cross.

"We are astonished, thirdly, at the prodigious success of the scheme. It is not more certain that Christ presented Himself to men as the founder, legislator, and judge of a divine society, than it is certain that men have accepted Him in these characters, that the divine society has been founded, that it has lasted nearly two thousand years, that it has extended over a large, and that the most highly civilized portion of the earth's surface, and that it continues full of vigor at the present day."

The Kingdom, or the Church Continued.

VIEWED in its bearings on our religious interests, the Church is an institution of unspeakable value.

In the first place it furnishes the followers of Christ with opportunities of pleasant and profitable intercourse with each other. People must have society. They cannot be happy alone. And they must have the society of persons with views, and tastes, and interests somewhat similar to their own. Christians must have Christian society. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? And what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" Christians can no more find suitable companionship among worldlings, than Adam could find a suitable mate among the lower animals. The Christian and the worldling belong to different orders of beings. They are like each other in form, but not in spirit. They live in different worlds. They have different thoughts and different feelings; different interests and different pursuits. They are governed by different principles, and live for different ends. One lives by faith; the other lives by sense. One lives to please God; the other lives to please himself. One has a regard to things unseen and eternal; the other cares only for the things that are seen and are temporal. One is go-

verned by love and duty, the other by self and circumstances. The life of the one is earthly and animal ; the life of the other is spiritual and heavenly. They were alike at first ; but the Christian has been born again ; created anew. It is impossible there should be any thing like free and happy fellowship between creatures so opposite.

And as a matter of fact, worldly people do not like the society of real, earnest Christians. They keep out of their company as long as they can ; and when they fall into it, they make their escape as quickly as possible. They are out of their element in Christian society. They are willing enough to trade with Christians ; but they do not like to come into close quarters with them, or to have much of their society. They spoil their pleasures, disturb their consciences, and make them very uncomfortable.

And Christians are not happy in the company of worldlings. They can trade with them, but they cannot enjoy their society. If they go among them it is to do them good ; as the physician goes among the sick, not for the sake of their society, but that he may cure them of their diseases. When he wishes for the advantages and pleasures of society, he will go among the healthy, and seek the company of such as have tastes, and habits, and sentiments like his own. And so with the Christian. He too will seek for the pleasures and advantages of society, neither among the thoughtless

and indifferent, nor among the vicious and unbelieving, but among men that are spiritually alive; among people that love God, and Christ, and goodness, and mankind, and who take delight in religious worship, and in labors of beneficence. He must have the society of beings of the same order as himself; men with whom he can heartily sympathize.

In the Church he meets with the society he wants and needs. Here he finds men with whom he can feel at home; men who love the same great Father, and the same adorable Saviour; men who believe the same great truths, and are governed by the same high principles; men who can talk with each other on the same great subjects, and labor together in the same great work; men who love him, and whom he can love, with a pure heart fervently; men with whom he can sing and pray, and weep and rejoice, and be at rest and happy.

The Church brings together the best and the wisest, and they make each other better and wiser. It brings together men of various temperaments, and of different degrees and different kinds of culture, and each improves his brother. They shame out of existence each other's weaknesses, and strengthen and develop each other's virtues. They provoke each other to love and good works. Each tries to be like the best, and the best try ever more to be better, and all move on towards perfection.

The Church brings together the more enlight-

ened and the less enlightened, and furnishes the one opportunities of teaching what he knows, and the other opportunities of learning what he needs to know. And it affords the better informed opportunities of instructing one another. For those who are equal in knowledge, are not always equally well acquainted with the same subjects. One is better informed on this subject, and another on that. And when they come together, each imparts to the other, what the other had not, and both are enriched. And when they part, they will study different subjects, and read different books, and each will gather something which the other will not: but when they meet again, each becomes the sharer of the other's acquisitions.

Even the less informed add to each other's stock of knowledge, and the most knowing will learn important lessons at times from the least knowing. I may make but one discovery while you make ten; yet my discovery may be different from any of yours, and the communication of it may add to the spiritual riches of the wealthiest soul in the Church.

The Church brings together the morally and the religiously strong, and the morally and the religiously weak: and the strong support the weak. And the weak become strong by contact with the strong; and the strong become stronger in strengthening the weak. And the timid become brave in company with the brave, and the brave become

bolder in company with the bold. And all become happier, and mightier for good, in fellowship with each other. They grow up together from spiritual childhood to spiritual manhood, and approach ever nearer 'to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

The Church aids the improvement of its members through the medium of its Pastors and Teachers.

It opens to its members the way to usefulness. It gives opportunities of useful labor to men and women of all varieties of gifts.

It also furnishes facilities for co-operation among its members for an endless variety of good objects.

It greatly promotes the comfort of its members, by affording them opportunities for religious conversation and social worship.

A Church can take in charge the young of its neighborhood, and "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

It can supply the means for the relief of its needy members.

In proportion as the Church possesses the spirit, and studies the teachings and example of its founder, will its usefulness in all these ways be increased.

The Church is of use in other ways. The mere act of joining the Church has a good effect on a man. It is the expression of a resolution on his part to serve God, to live a Christian life; and the

expression of such a resolution strengthens a man's virtue. The man not only feels himself under a new or additional obligation to live well, but he feels more power to do so.

In joining the Church he breaks loose from his old companions, and gets out of the way of many temptations.

People expect a man who joins the Church, to live a better life ; they reproach him with inconsistency if he does not. The Church member knows this, and the consciousness of it makes him live carefully.

The new Church member finds comfort and strength in the Christian sympathy he meets with from the pastor and members of the Church.

Then a man does good to others by joining the Church. Every new man that enters the Church encourages and strengthens the older members.

He also does good to those who are outside the Church. His joining the Church is a testimony to his old friends and acquaintances that he considers their way of life wrong, and their condition an unhappy one.

The man who joins the Church comes to be influenced by the spirit of the Church ; and in proportion as the Church is what its author meant it to be, that spirit will be a spirit of holiness, of love, of peace, and of joy. As the temperature of metal gradually rises to the temperature of the furnace in which it is placed ; so the temperature

of a man's soul rises to that of the Church of which He becomes a member.

The wish to be in favor with the Church,—the desire to have the confidence of its members,—the dread of rebuke and excommunication, have a salutary influence on a man's mind.

The exercise of his benevolent and religious affections in the Church, strengthens his soul, and improves his whole character.

The kind concern of the good for our welfare, and their joy in our happiness, does us good, and makes us wishful to become better.

The elder watch over the younger, and draw them on in goodness.

The younger are withdrawn from dangerous places, dangerous pastimes, dangerous persons, dangerous books, and from a host of temptations and snares.

The hymns and prayers of the Church, and the counsels and experiences of its members prove a help and a comfort to the souls of the younger members.

Our labors for the good of others to which the Church lures us, do us good: make us better, stronger, happier. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

We can hardly remain long in a Church without becoming more intimately acquainted with Jesus. We shall hear good things about Him in sermons, and in the conversation of our fellow Christians.

We shall find a multitude of sweet transporting things about Him in the Hymns of the Church, and while our hearts are melted in singing those hymns, their sweet and holy sentiments will blend with our souls, and become a part of our character and being. And it will be a wretched, counterfeit Church indeed, if it does not both set forth the beauties of Christ's doctrine, and life, and character, and bring us to study them prayerfully both in the Gospels, the Hymn Books, and other Christian publications.

As a matter of fact, members of Churches are better than those who run loose in the world. They are, as a rule, better even than those outsiders who themselves are much better than others through the Church's influence. They are incalculably better than infidels, and reckless ungodly people.

People generally become better when they join the Church ; and they become worse when they leave it,—much worse. In many cases they run down headlong into ruin. And those who do not degenerate suddenly, do so surely, and often much more rapidly than they are aware.

You might as well expect good crops of grain in the unenclosed wilderness, trampled and cropped by herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, as expect rich harvests of virtue and piety in the wildernesses of the world, outside the enclosures of the Church.

Men require to be brought under civil law and government, if their lives are to be tolerable either to themselves or others ; and if they are to rise to the higher life of humanity, the life of holy love and beneficence, they must have a still closer organization. They must be brought under Christian rule and discipline.

Settlers in the wilderness first enclose a field or a farm, and that yields them great advantages. They next enclose part of their farm as a garden or orchard, and give it special culture, planting sweet flowers and fruit-bearing trees. This doubles their comfort. The organization of civil society is like the enclosing of the farm, and it yields corresponding advantages. The organization of the Christian Church is like the enclosing of the orchard and garden patch, and it yields still richer benefits.

Some years ago certain Churches threw down their fences, and discarded discipline, in a mistaken zeal for Christian liberty ; and they have in consequence perished. Their garden plots have become parts of the moral wilderness, and are distinguished from the rest only by ranker weeds of selfishness, worldliness, and great ungodly errors.

A certain amount of freedom is needful to the Church's integrity and purity, its vigor and happiness : but unlimited liberty is neither possible nor desirable. And unlimited liberty for one class, would be the extreme of slavery or torture for the rest. Unlimited liberty is as bad as unmitigated

despotism. Despotism is, in fact, nothing else, but the unlimited liberty of one man to make others do as he wishes. And unlimited liberty always means the despotism, the tyranny, of the strongest or the worst. "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free," but seek no further freedom.

Many think they can be as good outside the Church as within. We thought so ourselves once; but found at length we were grievously mistaken. Thousands have thought so, and acted on their thoughts, and come to ruin.

Some think men can be good without religion; as good as they can be with it. We know they cannot; and wo to the unhappy man that makes the experiment.

Both religion and Church fellowship are necessary to excellence in virtue and piety, and they are necessary to all. Both Christianity and the Church are necessities of human nature, if human nature is to have its highest and happiest development. In fact, Christianity and the Church are one, and cannot be separated without ruin to both, and ruin to mankind.

In nothing did Jesus evince greater wisdom, greater superiority to all other moral and religious reformers, than in founding His Church; and the sooner you enter its enclosure, and the more faithfully you act in accordance with its principles and rules, the better will you fare, both in time and in eternity.

We know that some are morally stronger than others ; but none can do without the helps to holiness which Jesus has ordained. Some may make a better show without them than their fellows for a time ; but, in every case, the end of disobedience will be death.

Some of the sweetest and most beautiful of our flowering shrubs, and some of the richest of our fruit-bearing trees, are unable to raise themselves from the ground without the assistance of their stronger kindred. This is the case with the honeysuckle, the ivy and the grape vine. Left to themselves on the open plain, they sprawl upon the ground, choked with the grass, and cropped and trampled on by beasts, until at length they perish. But placed in woods or hedgerows, they clasp with their living tendrils, or embrace with their whole bodies, their vigorous neighbors, climb to the light and sunshine by their aid, display their blossoms, and bear their rich delicious fruit in full perfection. And we are like these trees. We must have support from others, or perish.

This is not all. Even the stoutest and strongest trees, such as the oak, the ash, and the sycamore, do best in company. Plant those trees in groves, and guard them from the crushing steps and greedy maws of cattle, and they grow up tall, and straight, and smooth. They shield each other from the stormy winds, and they show a sort of silent emulation, each raising its head as high as possible, to

catch the freshest air and the fullest streams of light. But plant one of those trees alone in the open field, and leave it unfenced and unguarded, and the probability is, it will perish. If it should escape destruction, its growth will be retarded, and its form will be disfigured. It will have neither size nor comeliness. It will be cropped by the cattle, and bent and twisted by the winds; it will be stunted and dwarfed, crooked and mis-shapen, knotted and gnarled, neither pleasant to the eye, nor good for timber. Not one in a thousand would ever become a tall, a straight, and a majestic tree.

Mr. Darwin says, that on some large tracts, on which, while they were unenclosed and unprotected, there was not a tree to be seen, there soon appeared, after the land was enclosed by a fence, a countless multitude of fine Scotch firs. The seeds of these trees had been sown by some means, and they had germinated, and the embryo trees had sprung up; but the cattle had cropped the tender shoots, or crushed and trampled them down, and not one had been able to raise its head above the grass or heather. On looking down and searching carefully among the heather, he found in one square yard of ground, no fewer than thirty-two small trees, one of which had been vainly trying to raise its head above the heath for six and twenty years. After this tract of land had been enclosed for awhile, it was covered thick with a countless multitude of fine young trees. And so it is with

Christians. Leave them in the open common of the world, and they gradually come down to a level with the tastes and manners of the world. Place them within the guarded enclosures of the Church, and they rise to the dignity and glory of saints. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Nature has other facts which have a bearing on this subject. Wild fruit trees never improve till you transplant them and give them careful culture. Placed in garden enclosures, and favored with garden culture, they improve at once. They grow to a greater size, and they bear somewhat larger fruit. If from the seeds of your transplanted trees you raise fresh trees, you will have some much better, and bearing much better fruit, than their parents. If from the seeds of the best of these you raise trees, you will have still better trees, and richer fruit. And so on for many generations. And families and tribes that belong to the Church from generation to generation will, if they faithfully improve their privileges, grow better and better, age after age, till they reach a degree of excellence, and enjoy an amount of happiness, of which few can form a conception.

We will act in accordance with the wish of our great model. We will avail ourselves of the institutions of His wisdom and love. And we say to all who wish to excel in goodness, and to make the best and most of life, Enter the Church. And

when you get in, stay there. And honor it by a truly Christian life, and aid it by your labors and liberality. And try to live in peace both with your pastor and your fellow-members. Obey the rules. Do not dream of unlimited liberty; you cannot have it; and it would do you no good if you could, but harm. Judge the Church and your pastors charitably, as you would like to be judged yourself. Expect to find imperfections in them, and make as much allowance for them as you can, that they may be led to make allowances for the imperfections they find in you. Look more at the good that is in your brethren than at the evil; it will cause you to love them the more, and make you feel happier in their company. If any of them be overtaken in a fault, try to restore them, in the spirit of meekness. And let the mishaps of your brethren remind you that *you* too are exposed to temptation.

Calculate on meeting with trials or unpleasantnesses in the Church occasionally; for offences are sure to come. Churches are made up of men, and men are full of imperfections, so that misunderstandings, and even misdoings at times, are inevitable. You may be misjudged or undervalued. There will be differences of tastes and opinions, and even clashings of interests between you and your brethren. And trials may come from quarters from which you could never have expected them, and of a kind that you could not

possibly anticipate. But make up your minds, by the help of God, to bear all patiently. Remember how God has borne with you, and consider what Jesus suffered from the weaknesses, the errors, and the sins of men : and how meekly and patiently He endured. And remember, too, that others may have to bear with as many unpleasantnesses from you, as you have to bear with from them. You may misunderstand or undervalue others, as much as they misunderstand or undervalue you. And others may be as much disappointed in you, as you are in them. And you may try their patience, as much as they try yours. We know when we are hurt by others, but we do not always know when others are hurt by us. And we can see the defects of others, when we cannot see our own. And we should consider that *they* will know when they are hurt by us, when they may not know that we are hurt by them ; and that they will be able to see our imperfections, when they will be quite unconscious of their own. And if we would not have them make too much of our defects and blunders, we must not make too much of theirs. If they can bear with us, we must learn to bear with them, and think ourselves well off to have things settled so. If we could see ourselves as God sees us, we might be more astonished that others should be able to bear with us, than that we should be required to bear with them.

Jesus required of all as the condition of admis-

sion into His church or kingdom, such a faith in him as would lead them to obey His teachings, and so lift them up out of the lower, animal, worldly life, into a life of love and beneficence.

With regard to opinions and forms, He left His followers free. Still He required them to beware of error and to seek for the truth; and He knew that if they did so, they would come gradually nearer to perfection both in knowledge and in virtue.

To secure the peace and comfort of the church, He laid down the following rule: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

What a pity this rule is not more carefully observed!

It was the custom to admit believers into the church by baptism; but the living, lasting mark of Christian discipleship was mutual love. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples when ye have love one to another."

Jesus seems to have meant that His disciples should join occasionally in a solemn feast in com-

memoration of his love in giving Himself a sacrifice for the salvation of the world. This rule is generally observed, and the happy results are past question. But the good effects would probably be much greater if, at this feast of the church, the members were reminded that the love which Christ showed to them by His sufferings and death, they are themselves bound to cherish, and to exhibit to all mankind.

It is well when we take the emblems of Christ's body and blood, to think with gratitude of the blessings we receive through His sufferings and death; but if we could bring ourselves to make similar sacrifices for the salvation of others, it would be still better. We are only Christians so far as we have the mind of Christ. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And the spirit of Christ is the spirit of self-sacrificing love.

Jesus asks for no costly rites or ceremonies; but He asks for costly services. But what He asks, He asks not for Himself, but for our brethren of mankind. And who that considers the matter can resist the pleadings of His love?

The following are, in substance, some of the remarks of ECCE HOMO on the Church:

To organize a society, and to bind its members together by the closest ties, was a grand essential with Christ. And in this also, as in so many others of His wondrous deeds of wisdom and good-

ness, He stands alone. No other moralist ever instituted a church, and hence, in a great measure, their failure to effect a moral reformation.

Without a society and an authority of some kind, moral teaching is comparatively useless. Of the morality which a man theoretically holds, there is one part which he always and easily practises, and another which he often neglects. He knows that the pleasure he finds in telling scandalous stories is as vicious as the taste for theft. Yet he sometimes tells such stories, though he never thinks of stealing. The reason is, theft is a vice which political society exists to put down, and telling scandalous stories is not. Thus civil society and civil law create a certain amount of morality.

Now, what civil society is to justice and honesty, the Church is to all virtues alike, and especially to those which are nursed by no other society, such as philanthropy, mercy and forgiveness.

With regard to the improvement which Christ has effected in the moral characters of men generally, our author says: "Compare the ancient with the modern world. One broad distinction in the characters of men forces itself into prominence. Among all the men of the ancient heathen world there were not more than one or two, if any, who, besides being virtuous in their actions, were possessed with an unaffected enthusiasm of goodness. No one probably will deny that this highest toned goodness has existed in Christian countries. Few

will maintain that it has been exceedingly rare. Perhaps the truth is, that there has scarcely been a town in any Christian country since the time of Christ, where a century has passed without exhibiting a character of such elevation, as that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the presence of God Himself.

If a high and complete morality often exists *outside* the Church, it does not often exist *independent* of it. The atmosphere of Europe has been saturated for some fifteen centuries with Christian principles, and however far the rebellion against the Church may have spread, it may still be called the Moral University of the world—not merely the greatest, but the only great School of Virtue existing. While this is so, it is idle for any virtue that springs up in its neighborhood to claim to be independent of it. Christian influences are in the air; our very conception of virtue is Christian; the tone, the habits of sentiment and language; in short, all the associations of virtue, have been furnished by the discipline of the Christian Church.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JESUS,—THINGS WHICH HE DID NOT INSTITUTE.

ALL the religions of the ancient Pagans abounded, not only with foolish and superstitious rites, but with cruel and bloody, and even licentious and obscene practices. A catalogue of the sacrifices and ceremonies, of the rites and customs of ancient Paganism, would fill volumes. The religions of the modern Pagan world are not much better. It is distressing to read the accounts of the religions, not only of savage nations, but of nations that are semi-civilized, like those of India. Now of all these filthy and licentious, of all these cruel and bloody, of all these foolish and frivolous rites and ceremonies, Jesus enjoins not one. The worship He prescribes is as pure as the light and as holy as heaven.

Then again, in connection with all the religions of the Pagan world, ancient or modern, you have a multitude of foolish, immoral, and mischievous notions, on a great variety of subjects. The notions about God and the universe, about caste and woman, embodied in the religions of India, form a mass of the most pitiable, unnatural and inhuman notions conceivable. Other pagan religions resemble those of India, though few of them are so bad. The religion of Christ is free from all such notions.

The views it presents of God and man are rational and just, and pure and good to the last degree.

Again you can see from reading the writings of Moses, that the religion of the Jews was a low, a burdensome and expensive system, and you learn from the New Testament, that in passing through the hands of the priests and elders, it became intolerable. Jesus leaves out of His religion everything low, and bloody, and burdensome, requiring no worship but what is purely spiritual, and no sacrifices but those of mercy and beneficence.

Thus you have in Christianity a religion which not only contains all that is good and glorious, but which is free from all admixtures of revolting, indecent, and cruel practices, and from all mischievous errors and absurdities.

You may find a multitude of foolish rites and ceremonies in churches called Christian, and a multitude of absurd and immoral notions in systems of theology called Christian; and numbers of objectionable practices in people called Christians; but not one of those foolish rites or ceremonies, not one of those immoral or monstrous notions, and not one of those objectionable practices can you trace to Christ. Jesus steers clear of human weakness and of human wickedness on all sides. He never rises above, He never falls below, what is good for man. He never deviates from reason or propriety, from truth or goodness, either to the right hand or to the left in the smallest degree. All

is pure, and good and true; all is beautiful, god-like and glorious.

Once more. There is nothing in Christ's teachings to keep you back from any thing that is calculated either to improve your own thoughts, or to increase your own happiness, or to promote the improvement and happiness of your fellow-men. You are at liberty to read, or investigate nature, or study antiquity, or amass learning, or to fast, or withdraw occasionally from society, or to follow trade, or cultivate the ground, or to follow whatever innocent course you have reason to believe most conducive to your welfare. And you are left free to write and print good books, to form libraries, to build churches, schools and colleges, teach arts and sciences, employ music and song, and painting and sculpture, establish Botanical and Zoological gardens, museums and picture galleries, form societies for the improvement of cities, for draining swamps, and for improving the health of the community both in town and country. There is not a word in all Christ's teachings enjoining anything evil, or forbidding anything good. We are bound, so far as restraint is necessary; and we are free, so far as liberty is desirable; and in the whole compass of Christian doctrine we have neither a word too much, nor a word too little, nor a word any otherwise than as wisdom and love would have it to be.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JESUS,—OBJECTIONS.

It has been objected that Jesus did not treat His mother and His brethren with sufficient courtesy and kindness, when told on one occasion while He was preaching that they were waiting without, and wished to speak with Him.

We see no foundation for the charge.

1. It is not said that He refused to see His mother and brethren. True, He did not at once give up His work, and break away from His audience; nor do we know any reason why He should have done so. There is a time for everything.

2. We are told by John that His brethren did not believe on Him; and Mark, in the earlier part of the same chapter in which he tells us of the request of His mother and brethren to speak with Him, informs us, that His kinsmen sought to lay hands on Him, for they said, 'He is beside Himself.' Now if the object of His brothers and mother was to drag Him away from His work, under the impression that He was mad, it could certainly be no duty of His to put Himself in their hands. Nor are we sure that it would have been wrong in Him, in such a case, to speak of their interference

in something like terms of reproof. And He certainly would be justified in taking occasion under such circumstances to announce, that His nearest relations were His spiritual ones,—that the ties of heaven were stronger than those of earth, and that kinship of soul was more than kinship of body.

3. Then Jesus was not a child. He was over thirty years of age. He had reached the time when a man is entitled to be free, and to act in accordance with his own sense of duty.

And it is hardly likely that He had given His mother any good ground to suppose that He was unable to take care of himself, and needed to be placed in charge of His selfish, worldly, infidel brothers.

4. And common sense tells us, and the wisest of the ancient Pagans have told us, and Jesus Himself had taught His hearers, that we are not to sacrifice the interests of truth and righteousness, of God and humanity, to any one. Friends and kindred have strong claims upon us, but God and truth and conscience have stronger.

5. The probability is, that the very thing which the enemies of Jesus regard as objectionable, was not only perfectly right, but was necessary to the completeness of His example. We know that a man may love his parents and brethren, and even his wife and children, too much. He may idolize them, and give to them what he ought to give to God. We know by experience, as well as by

observation and common sense, that a man may be so hampered and hindered in the great work of his life, by undue regard for his relations, as to be prevented from accomplishing the object for which he was created. Relations are sometimes so selfish, and proud, and worldly, that if you would allow them, they would make you work yourself to death to procure them the means of their own discreditable gratification. They would, if we may be allowed a figure, put out the eyes of their father, and set him to grind himself to death in a mill, that they might spend their days in idleness and luxury. They would make him leave the work to which he was ordained by God, and become a hireling hack of a corrupt press and of a corrupt public, to enable them to lift up their heads in pride, and spend their days in a vain show. Mothers, brothers, children do not always believe in the mission of their gifted relations. They do not always like the idea of a father, a brother, or a son being a preacher or a philanthropist. It clashes with their tastes, their pleasures, or their fancied interests. They had rather you should get them great fortunes than save souls. They had rather you should get them a large roll of bank notes, than write the ablest and most useful books. What is the use of writing books, if they bring you not plenty of money? What is the use of laboring for people that cannot or that will not make you and your family rich? Get money, and you will

be respected. Get money, and you will open our way into the highest circles in society. Make us millionaires, and men will talk of you, and you will be honored in your children. And if you find yourself unable to comply with their demands, they will harass you, annoy you, despise you, and tell you, at length, that you are mad.

Even persons that are religious, in *profession*, will cause a gifted relation to prostitute his powers and property to their selfish interests sometimes, if they can. They will impose on him, and, if he places his concerns in their hands, will keep from him the true state of his affairs, till they have accomplished their selfish objects; and when he wakes up from his sleep of false security, he may find himself at the mercy of heartless, cruel, and unnatural plunderers and tormentors. If he complains, they insult him: if he demands his rights, they mock him; and if he presses the matter, they torture him to the point of death, and may even give him to understand, that they would not be sorry to see him safely laid to rest.

If he succeeds in wresting a portion of his life and property out of their hands, they will repay his life-long love and labors with mortal hate, and make him feel "how keener than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

Nothing is more common with good, kind fathers, than idolatrous love of children. And nothing is so strong, so foolish, so blinding, as the

passionaté love of an idolatrous father or mother. And the undue confidence which it leads the idolaters to place in their children, invariably corrupts them, and fits them for the most unnatural and revolting cruelties.

Jesus was not a parent; but imagine Him to have carried His love to His mother and brethren to the extreme of idolatry; and what would have been the result? He would have yielded to His brethren's entreaties, and allowed Himself to have been made a worldly king, and have thrown away the richest treasure of grace, of usefulness, of glory and blessedness, for vanity, vexation, shame and death. All the crowns and kingdoms on earth would not have been worth one breath, compared with the boundless blessedness and glory He must have cast away.

It is part of the matchless virtue and glory of Christ's character, that He was above the weakness of family idolatry, and above the weakness of idolatry of any kind. He had a just respect, and an honest, hearty, generous love for all; but idolatry for none. He loved His mother, He loved His brothers, He loved His sisters, He loved His friends; but He did not worship them. He would serve them for their good; but He would not be the slave of their worldly desires, or the victim of their pride and ambition. He would give them what was their due; but He would not throw away on them the gifts bestowed on Him for the salvation of the

world. He would be true to God, to conscience, and to mankind.

He was perfect in all the relations of life. He rose above the fear of the good. He rose above the fear of the bad. He rose above undue anxiety for the weak, and above excessive regard for the strong. Neither the good nor the evil, neither the wise nor the foolish, neither the rich nor the poor, neither the low nor the high, could divert Him from His great object, or draw Him from His glorious work. He was the gentlest and the firmest, the tenderest and the sternest, the most generous and the most inexorable of all beings. Nothing could hold Him back from the point to which He felt He ought to go: and nothing could make Him go a hair's breadth further. Nothing could close His mouth when duty bade Him speak; and nothing could make Him speak when duty said, Be silent. All around him might waver; but He was immovable. He could disappoint the rulers; He could disappoint the nation; He could disappoint the rich; and, still harder task, He could disappoint the poor; He could disappoint His kindred; He could disappoint His followers; He could disappoint the best and dearest friend on earth, rather than betray His trust. He could endure the questionings, He could endure the perplexities, He could endure the anxieties and fears of the people, and keep them for months or years in dark suspense, rather than imperil His cause.

He could disappoint His most affectionate followers, both men and women, rather than disappoint Heaven, and mock the expectant universe. He could lead on His followers in comparative darkness to results they could not possibly anticipate, and through sorrows and disappointments which they found it all but impossible either to understand or to bear. He could wrench from them by slow degrees the very life of their lower nature, to prepare them for a higher and nobler life of which as yet they had no conception. Though more tender-hearted than the fondest mother, he could give his children the most distasteful draughts, and perform on them the most distressing operations, rather than endanger their highest interests. He could, to use his own figure, cut off for them their right hands, pluck out for them their right eyes, and subject them to appalling losses, to secure for them the boundless and endless blessings of His incomprehensible spiritual kingdom.

Yes; in this, as in other things, Jesus is our needful and our perfect model. He teaches in deeds what his favorite Apostle inculcates in words: "Keep yourselves from idols."

Another objector says, 'If Jesus had been really benevolent, He would have healed *all* that were sick, have fed *all* that were hungry, and have made all perfectly happy. If He had all power, He *could* have healed and fed all, as well as a part; and if He had been truly benevolent, He *would* have done so.'

We answer, if He were *wise* as well as powerful and benevolent, He might see reasons for confining His miraculous beneficence within certain bounds. We would not cure all diseases and supply all wants, however great our powers, unless we could do so without peril to men's moral and spiritual interests. We would not cure the drunkard's headache, unless he would give up his drunkenness. We would not supply men with bread, unless they would work. We would not preserve the gambler from loss or anxiety, unless he would give up his gambling. We would not save the profligate from disease, unless he would reform. It would be a curse to men to save them from all the consequences of sin before they were saved from sin itself. Jesus worked beneficent miracles sufficient to prove both His goodness and His power, and He checked Himself in time to save Himself from the sin and discredit of encouraging idleness, recklessness, and villany.

'If God were good He would prevent evil,' say the objectors. We answer, God is wise, and knows that pain is necessary to check sin, and to make people thoughtful and good. God has a higher object in view than merely to keep people from pain and suffering. There are greater evils than pain and suffering; and God's object is to prevent and cure those evils. There are greater blessings than ease and sensual enjoyment, and God's object is to fit men for those greater blessings.

Jesus acted in accordance with the spirit of natural law, even in His supernatural works.

Paine acknowledges that Jesus was a good man, and desired to promote the welfare of mankind ; but contends that He was ignorant as to the best means for the attainment of that object. If Jesus had understood the interests of mankind, says he, He would have made it His object to establish representative and republican Governments.

It was Paine, not Jesus, that was ignorant of the best means of promoting the welfare of mankind. The happiness of nations depends on their characters, and not on their forms of government. If they are wise and good, they will be prosperous and happy : if they be ignorant and vicious, they will be poor and miserable. An enlightened mind, a good heart, and a Christian life will secure happiness under any form of government ; and nothing else will do it. Sin will make men miserable in paradise, and religion will make men happy in a wilderness.

Even outward temporal good cannot be secured without virtue. Vice will cause disease, and want, and misery ; and righteousness will give health, and purity, and happiness, both to individuals and nations, let the form of government be what it may. It is what men *are* that determines both what they shall have, and how much good they shall get out of it.

You can have tyranny under a representative

government, and liberty under an hereditary one. A monarch may be incorruptible, while a congress is bribed ; and republics may hold men in slavery, after an empire has given its slaves their liberty.

You can neither secure representative and republican governments till the people are measurably enlightened and virtuous, nor can you, when you have got them, make them work properly, except so far as the people are wise and good. Paine's speculations on national welfare have all proved false ; while the principles of Jesus are proved true by the experience of the whole world.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JESUS, HIS MIRACLES.

THERE are a few facts about the miracles of Jesus which deserve to be noticed.

1. The miracles of Jesus were very numerous. He never appears to have turned away an applicant for the cure of a disease.

2. They were all of a beneficent nature. Most of them were miracles of healing. Two were wrought to feed the hungry, fainting multitudes who crowded to hear His doctrine. The blasting of the fig tree was useful as a warning, and the

stilling of the tempest was a lesson of comfort and confidence.

3. They were all in keeping with His character as the image, the representative, the revelation of God. They were all revelations of God; exhibitions of His infinite goodness and power.

4. They were fit proofs of his connection with God, of His divine mission, of the truth of His doctrine, of His title to the respect, and love, and confidence of mankind. All common-sense, unperverted people would say with Nicodemus: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man could do these miracles which thou doest, except God were with him."

5. The miracles of Jesus were in keeping with His doctrine, and tended to illustrate its meaning, as well as to prove its truth.

6. They were calculated to rouse men's minds, and draw their attention to His doctrine and work.

7. The doctrine that miracles are impossible is a mere infidel fiction, without any countenance either from the nature of man or from the facts of nature outside man. Nature and man favor the old-fashioned doctrine of miracles.

8. Christ never *tried* to work miracles; but simply wrought them.

9. The miracles of Jesus embraced cures of all the more serious kinds of disease. The power that could cure lepers, paralytics, and men born blind, could do all things.

10. Christ's miracles were done in a quiet, unostentatious way, as great deeds are generally done by great, good men.

11. Christ's miracles were sufficiently numerous to prove His power over nature, but not numerous enough to encourage men to disregard the established laws of nature.

12. Jesus wrought no miracle for His own comfort, or ease, or protection. He gave no ground for a suspicion either of selfishness, or of a reluctance to suffer for the honor of His Father, or the salvation of mankind.

13. He wrought no miracles for the aggrandizement of His family.

14. He wrought no miracle to make any one rich, or independent of labor, but only to relieve the present, pressing wants of the faint and famishing.

15. Though He cured diseases, and raised the dead, He made no one immortal on earth. He interfered as little as possible with the ordinary arrangements of Providence.

16. He wrought no special miracles in behalf of the rich and powerful. Nearly all His miracles were wrought for the poor.

17. He never wrought miracles to gratify any one's curiosity, nor would He display His wonder-working power at the demand of hardened unprincipled infidels.

18. He wrought His miracles publicly, in the

presence of the people. None of His miracles could be called private ones. Those which were most private were in part public. Privacy was never sought.

19. The miracles, according to the Gospel story, convinced vast multitudes that He was from God, and led them to become His disciples.

20. The good effects of His miracles remain to the present time. They, in connection with His wonderful character and doctrine, have changed the state of the world.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

JESUS: EFFECTS OF HIS PREACHING, ETC.

WE have already spoken of the effects of Christ's preaching during His life. It is plain that it excited the whole nation. It is also plain that it was the means of conversion to many. Several of the most hopeless classes became new creatures. And several of the rulers believed on Him. And there are plain intimations that many between those two extremes were brought to God. Numbers of good people were drawn to Him, and became His disciples. Great numbers were baptized in His name, many of whom were brought under His transforming power. The effect on the people at large was such that the rulers began to

fear that the whole nation would go after Him. His two days' labor at Sychar resulted in the conversion of quite a multitude, and it is probable that similar effects were produced by His ministry in a number of other places. It is doubtful whether any of His converts properly understood His plans, but they loved Him, trusted Him, placed themselves under His authority, and were prepared to welcome whatever further light He might pour upon their souls. Several of His hearers became preachers, and carried His Gospel into other lands. To give the happy effects of His ministry down to the present time, would require a number of volumes. The history of the beneficent influence of Christianity, is the history of Christendom, and to a great extent the history of the world, for eighteen hundred years.

After His death the effect of His labors became more striking. His Apostles shook the whole Jewish nation. On the day of Pentecost they kindled fires which spread into all the world. The Christians were full of zeal. When scattered abroad by persecution, they went everywhere, preaching the word. And the word ran and was glorified. Hosts of new-made men and women, armed with the power of God, and full of truth and charity, ran to and fro, teaching in every place the lessons of the Saviour, and turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The trembling and despairing Gentiles, who had

lived without God and without hope, now learned to call the God of Heaven their Father, and to rejoice in hope of everlasting life. The despairing and broken-hearted slaves of superstition, saw in the doctrine of Emmanuel the way of life; and they wept aloud for joy; and thousands that had groped their way in darkness, and had been full of fear, now were joyful as the wrecked and drowning seaman who has reached the shore. In every country, where the Gospel was preached, a new and unheard of race of men sprang forth, who neither coveted the pleasures of the world, nor feared its pains; but who set their hearts upon a world unseen, and had no other care on earth but to instruct and bless mankind. These formed themselves in every place into Churches, and united their prayers, their counsels and their efforts for the conversion of their fellow-men.

And now for many ages truth has been prevailing over error, and righteousness prevailing over sin: and still the glorious work goes on. The religion of the Saviour is combating and driving back the powers of evil; peace and freedom are prevailing over rage and tyranny; the errors and corruptions of a hundred generations are giving way, and whole nations are exchanging their savage superstitions for the Gospel of the Son of God. Bibles and tracts and missionaries are crossing every sea, penetrating every habitable spot of

earth, and scattering the seeds of holiness and joy in all societies of men.

The tendency of the religion of Christ to remedy the evils of mankind is manifest to all that are acquainted with its teachings. There is not a troublesome passion in the heart of man which it does not subdue; there is not a mischievous practice in all the varieties of human conduct, which it does not destroy. It takes away all hardness of heart, cures all selfishness of feeling, unites the soul in love and gratitude to God, and fills it with restless and unbounded charity to man. It teaches men to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous; to make kind words the universal language, and kind deeds the universal business. It gives assurance to the penitent that God will pardon him, and that in answer to his prayers He will bestow His Holy Spirit, to enable him to live a life of Christian holiness. It cheers him in his sorrows, gives him courage in his conflicts, consoles him in affliction and bereavement, and yields him in the approach of death a foretaste of the joys of heaven. It is every thing to man. Without it the world is lost and ruined and undone; but let it spread, and let the kind intentions of its Author be accomplished, and sin shall be destroyed, and wrong and cruelty shall leave the world, and God shall dwell with men, and men shall live in love and harmony, blessed of God, and blessing one another, and heaven shall come down to earth.

We have not space at present to give an account of the astonishing, the world-wide beneficial effects of the religion of Jesus at any length. But it has changed the character of the mightiest nations, and renewed the face of the earth. And still it is working, like the almighty power of God, grappling with the powers of evil in men's souls, and creating multitudes anew in righteousness and true holiness. It is making men wise; it is making them good: it is making them happy; it is making them glorious; and it is plain that its mighty and beneficent operations are destined to go on till it has made all things new, and established the kingdom of God, and poured out the riches of heavenly joy, among all the nations of the earth.

The following testimonies to the unparalleled excellency and the happy effects of the religion of Jesus, are from Lecky, a skeptic.

‘There is but one example of a religion which is not naturally weakened by civilization, and that example is Christianity. . . . The great characteristic of Christianity, and the great moral proof of its divinity, is that it has been the main source of the moral development of Europe, and that it has discharged this office, not so much by the inculcation of a system of morals, however pure, as by the assimilating and attractive influence of a perfect IDEAL. There is, indeed, nothing more wonderful in the history of the human race, than the way in which that IDEAL has traversed the

lapse of ages, acquiring new strength and beauty with each advance of civilization, and infusing its beneficent influence into every sphere of thought and action.

‘No other religion combined so many distinct elements of power and attraction. It was bound by no local ties. It was equally adapted for every nation and for every class. It appealed in the strongest manner to the affections, and offered all the charms of a sympathetic worship. It united with its distinctive teachings a pure and noble system of morals, and proved itself capable of realizing it in action. It proclaimed the universal brotherhood of mankind. It taught the supreme sanctity of love. To the slave it was the religion of the suffering and the oppressed. To a world that had grown very weary gazing on the cold, passionless grandeur which Cato realized, and which Lucan sung, it presented in Jesus an IDEAL of compassion and of love,—an IDEAL destined to draw around it all that was greatest, as well as all that was noblest upon earth.

‘The chief cause of its success was the congruity of its teachings with the spiritual nature of mankind. It represented faithfully the supreme type of excellence to which men were then tending. It corresponded with their religious wants, aims, and emotions. The whole spiritual being could expand under its influence. And hence it was that it planted its roots so deeply in the hearts of men.

‘No other religion ever combined so many powers of attraction as Christianity both from its intrinsic excellence, and from its manifest adaptation to the special wants of the time. It produced more heroic actions, and formed more upright men than any other creed. Their main principle was the supreme excellence of love, and their charity unquestionably rose far above that of any other class. Their enemies themselves often acknowledged that Christianity had transformed the characters of multitudes, vivified the cold heart by a new enthusiasm, redeemed, regenerated, and emancipated the most depraved of mankind. Noble lives, crowned by heroic deaths, were the strong arguments of the infant Church.

‘There has never existed upon earth a community whose members were bound to one another by a deeper or a purer affection than the Christians in the days of persecution. There has never existed a community which exhibited, in its dealings with crime, gentler or more judicious kindness,—which combined more happily an unflinching opposition to sin with a boundless charity to the sinner, and which was, in consequence, more successful in reclaiming and transforming the most vicious of our race. And none of all the human race ever suffered so bravely or so meekly in times of persecution.

‘Philosophy was impotent to regenerate mankind. It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an IDEAL or model character, which through

all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love,—has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions,—has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice,—and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said, that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind, than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists since the world began.

This has indeed been the well-spring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all its sins and failings, the Church has preserved, in the character and example of its Founder, an enduring principle of regeneration. Perfect love creates a boundless, uncalculating self-denial, that transforms the character, and is the parent of every virtue. The power of the love of Christ has been displayed alike in the most heroic pages of Christian martyrdom, in the most pathetic pages of Christian regeneration, and in the tenderest pages of Christian charity."

This somewhat candid sceptic goes on to point out the great evils which Christianity abated or abolished, referring to infanticide, slavery, murderous pastimes, &c. He also speaks at length on the happy influences of Christianity on domestic life and national interests. But we have not room for further quotations, except this brief summary of

the great and multiform influences of Christian philanthropy.

‘ The high conception which has been formed of the sanctity of human life,—the protection of infancy,—the elevation and final emancipation of the slave classes,—the suppression of barbarous games,—the creation of a vast and multifarious organization of charity, and the education of the imagination by the Christian model, constitute together a movement of philanthropy which has never been paralleled or approached in the pagan world. The effect of this movement in promoting human happiness has been very great.’

Suppose the religion of Christ to be heartily believed and faithfully reduced to practice by mankind, what would be the result? It is not in the power of man’s tongue to describe, or of his mind to conceive the vast and happy changes which it would produce.

There are no evils which it would not abate or cure. It would curb the unruly appetites, and calm the turbulent passions of the individual. It would emancipate him from evil habits and corrupt affections. It would speak peace to his troubled conscience, and cheer his soul with an assurance of God’s favor. It would take away the bitterness of life, and deliver him from the fear of death, and kindle in his soul a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

While it purified and cheered the believer’s

heart, it would bless and glorify his home. It would make his habitation an abode of light and purity, of peace and joy. It would adorn the husband and the wife with every virtue and every grace; it would purify and elevate their conjugal affection, and make their love and friendship angelic and divine. None are so thoroughly united, —none are so happy and entirely one,—as those who are united in the Lord.

While it filled with the purest pleasures the souls of the parents, it would impart its more than earthly delights to the hearts of the children. One blessed feeling of love and confidence would make the whole family a sweet community of heavenly bliss.

It would purify and exalt the nation. It would dry up the fountains of political corruption and judicial iniquity. It would teach all officials to fear God and hate covetousness, and make them in deed, as well as in name, the servants of the community. It would improve the nation's laws and institutions, and perfect its government and administration. It would increase its prosperity, yet prevent its prosperity from becoming a source of corruption. It would increase the strength of the people, yet preserve them from all temptations to wrong and violence. It would teach them to love their sister nations, and secure for them the love and reverence of their sister nations in return; and it would do for all, far more and better than they could ask or think.

It is the image of the eternal God, the bright effulgence of His boundless love, and the one unfailing friend and benefactor of mankind. It blesses all ranks,—it blesses them in every way,—and makes each class a blessing to the rest. It makes those who are rich tender-hearted and liberal; it makes those who are high condescending and gentle; and it makes it the delight of both to employ themselves in communicating blessings to their humbler and needier brethren.

It exerts a happy influence on the laboring classes, lightening their toils, and multiplying their enjoyments: and while it improves the condition of the poor on earth, it gives them a title to a kingdom in heaven.

It illumines men's minds, and opens to them the grandest and most cheering views of God, of Providence, and of eternal life. It purifies men's souls, it reforms their lives, and it betters their lot. It makes them good, it makes them useful, and it makes them happy. It has blessings for every country, for every family, and for every heart. It wages war with all institutions, with all customs, and with all laws that are founded in error, injustice, or cruelty. It assails every form of selfishness, and rests not till it has driven it from its strongholds and hiding-places, and established in its stead the sweet, the heaven-born powers of mercy and charity. It is opposed to everything that is opposed to the interests of man, and it is friendly to everything that

is conducive to his welfare. It is God's best gift, His richest and greatest blessing to our race. It is the illuminator, the emancipator, the regenerator of the world. Its foundations are eternal truth ; its working is the almighty and beneficent power of God, and its effects are the joys and transports of heaven. It stands alone, the fairest visitant of earth, the loveliest offspring of the skies,—the bright outshining of eternal light,—the best, the mightiest, the eternal friend of man.

And here we close, with our devoutest thanks to God our Heavenly Father, and to Jesus Christ His well-beloved Son, our Lord, for the inestimable blessings we are permitted to enjoy, and for the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory reserved for us in heaven. We adore Thee, O God, and would bless Thy name for ever and ever. And to Thee, Thou Son of the Highest, we bow the knee, and with our heart and tongue acknowledge Thee to be the Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Thou art the King of glory, O Christ ; Thou art the Prince and Saviour of our race. We rejoice to bear Thy name, and to be permitted to labor in Thy cause. We consecrate our all to Thee. Our body, soul, and estate we place at Thy disposal. We feel it no task to preach Thy Gospel, and to labor for the salvation of Thy ransomed creatures. Thy yoke is easy ; Thy burden is light. We count no sacrifice costly which we are called to make for

Thee. We have nothing good, or rich, or joyous, but what we owe to Thy love ; and what we resign to Thee we receive again a hundredfold. It is heaven to be in fellowship with Thee, and to be permitted to take part in the great work of the world's salvation. We ask no higher privilege ; no richer bliss. Our only regret is that we cannot serve Thee as Thy love deserves. We are weak ; but the strength we have shall be Thine. We are poor, but the treasure we have we lay at Thy feet. And we will praise Thy name for ever and ever. King of the nations ; Lord of the universe ; Redeemer, Saviour of mankind, all hail !

Hail, holy Jesus ! hail, heavenly visitant ! Thou Friend and Saviour of the world, all hail. The world has waited for Thy appearing, and longed for Thy salvation. Thou art our hope and confidence ; to Thee the people of all lands are looking ; they sigh and wait for Thee. Deliverer of the nations, hail. Help of afflicted man, friend of the universe, all hail.

From all that dwell below the skies
Let the Creator's praise arise :
Let the Redeemer's name be sung
Through every land, by every tongue.



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